

PRACTICAL PIETY

EXEMPLIFIED,

In the Lives of Thirteen eminent
Christians, viz.

JOSEPH WILLIAMS,
MARGT. ABERCROMBIE,
A YOUNG MAN,
ELIZABETH CAIRNS,
Serjeant NISBET,
ALEX. ARCHIBALD,
ELIZABETH WEST,

JOHN RONALD,
ALISON MILL,
JAMES MITCHEL,
JOHN STEVENSON,
JAMES BARRY,
MARION SHAW.

And illustrated in

CASUISTICAL HINTS,

P R

CASES OF CONSCIENCE,

CONCERNING

Satan's Temptations,—Indwelling Sin,—Spiritual
Experiences,—Godly Conversation,—and Scan-
dalous Offences.

By JOHN BROWN, Minister of the Gospel
in HADDINGTON.

*The heart knoweth his own bitterness ; but a stranger doth
not intermeddle with his joy, PROV. xiv. 10.*

GLASGOW:

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M, DCC, LXXXIII.

WHEN guilt torments, and fears oppress,
the soul to Jesus cries;

He sees and pities the distress'd,
and yet his help denies.

But, sinner, whither canst thou fly?
thy help is only there:

Quit not thy hope,—repeat thy cry,—
assur'd thy God will hear.

“How canst thou ask the children's bread,
“unworthy as thou art?”

When thus he speaks, what wilt thou plead;
what answer in thine heart?

Plead this: thy misery confels:
just as thou art draw near.

Plead nothing but sin's wretchedness:
’tis all he wants to hear.

So wilt thou all his power engage
for he is still the SAME:

To ev’ry soul in ev’ry age
the SAVIOUR is his name.

MATTH. XV. 21,—28.



THE PREFACE.

THE following narratives added to those of The pleasantness of early piety ; and of the Christian, Student, and Pastor,—complete my intended EXEMPLIFICATION of PRACTICAL RELIGION; in which, I hope, believers of every age and station may find somewhat for their own reproof, correction, and instruction in righteousness. May God by them excite me and others to give all diligence to make our calling and election sure. I especially recommend them to the serious perusal of the rising generation.

The LIVES of serjeant Nisbet and Alison M'NAY I have taken from manuscripts, which I have sufficient reason to believe were written by themselves. I cannot say as much for that of Mr. James Hog ; but from its style and other circumstances, I am convinced that it is genuine. I know of several other copies of it besides that which I used ; and which, I suspect, was transcribed by his brother. Both it and that of serjeant Nisbet, are considerably large. The other Lives are formed from Publications sufficiently attested.

The CASUISTICAL HINTS were originally formed for my own use : and may now be considered as an appended illustration of the LIVES : or, as an Appendix to my System on the head of SANCTIFICATION ;—in which the principal experiences and exercises of a Christian are briefly pointed out. By turning them into questions and answers, they will be found so many useful Cases of Conscience.

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PRACTICAL CHRISTIANITY

EXEMPLIFIED

*The Life of JOSEPH WILLIAM'S, a rich
merchant in Kidderminster.*

WHEN I was about seven years old, a boy in another family died. My father took occasion to discourse with me very seriously, concerning the immortality of my soul, and the certainty of a state of future rewards and punishments, and my own liability to death every day. This surprized me, and filled me with a warm concern for the salvation of my soul: It put me on praying with uncommon earnestness, and on resolving to do the will of God, so far as I knew it.—When I was about ten years old, my father severely corrected me for telling and persisting in a deliberate lie, and at last obliged me to confess the truth. His rebukes, reasonings and expostulations wounded me deeper than his stripes, and melted me into very tender relentings. He then told me, that he forgave me, and that he would pray to God to forgive me, as this one sin was enough to condemn me to eternal misery, and charged me to go to my chamber, and pray earnestly to God for pardon. I did so, with a flood of tears, and, for a time, my prayers were more fervent than usual; and I was so ashamed that I could scarcely look at my father or a-

ny of the family.—In my *thirteenth* year, my little sister dying, and my father's exhortations and directions to us, in the family, being suited to the occasion, I retired to the stable, and there solemnly meditated on my own mortality, and prayed to be made ready to die. I had very lively convictions of the vanity of the world and its insufficiency to my real happiness, and of the incomparable value of an interest in Christ, and had some earnest desires after him.

After I had been sometime at my father's trade, and had my mind too much corrupted by the filthy conversation of the shop men, our minister, coming to the house, represented to me, what a comfort it would be to my parents to see me following that which is good; and what a grief to them to see me growing worse and worse, after they had begun to hope well of me. His gentle reproofs wrought kindly on me for a time.—In my *sixteenth* year I began to weave in the clothier's broad loom, with one that commonly wrought fourteen, and sometimes fifteen, or sixteen hours a day. This suppressed my opportunities for, and immoderate love to play. Often I had serious impressions wrought on my mind, on the Lord's day: but my continual employment, and the vain discourse, which filled my ears, together with the vanity of my own depraved heart, had them all too much worn out before monday night. But before I had finished two years at this work, my convictions became deeper,—that it was a grief to me to have so little time for secret prayer: and on the Lord's day these convictions were usually revived.—In my *eighteenth* year, I changed my employment for that which allowed me more time for religious duties: and my convictions of sin and my humiliation for it increased. I was more enlarged in secret prayer, and so filled with a sense of the greatness and majesty of God, that frequently I was not conscious of one wandering thought. Notwithstanding all my resolutions not to hearken to their discourse, but to keep my heart

heart fixed on God and heavenly things, the vain discourse of my fellow workmen and the natural gaiety of my temper often betrayed me into free and then into vain conversation. Being filled with grief every evening on this account, I prevailed with my father to let me work in a chamber by myself; but was ashamed to tell the reason. Being thus alone, I endeavoured to keep my heart all the day bent on religion: and for this purpose placed *Mason's Hymns*, or some other devotional book, so near me, that I could take in a line or two at a time, without hindering my work. In this manner, I learned all *Mason's Hymns*, and could adapt almost every line of them to myself. And frequently I had not only peace but *joy in believing*.

About this time, 1710, as I was meditating in a meadow, on the shortness and uncertainty of human life, and the wide difference between an eternity of happiness and of misery, I had such a sense of the joys of heaven, and pains of hell, as made all worldly enjoyments appear utterly unworthy to be compared with securing the salvation of my soul. I wondered that myself and others should spend our time in thinking, speaking, and acting to so little purpose, and that my pious father had not more earnestly laboured to impress my mind with my eternal concerns. Pouring out my heart to God in prayer, I received an inward witness, that I was a child of God. I was altogether ravished with the love of Christ, and earnestly desired to depart, and to be with him. Not long after, on a sabbath morning, awaking in a most serious frame, lamenting my little progress in the religious life, I rose and in a solemn manner devoted myself to the Lord resolving by his grace to hate, abhor, and forsake every sin, and to avoid and strive against all temptations to it; to shun the company of vain graceless persons; to commend myself to God by prayer, at least twice a day; to be careful and constant in meditation and self-examination; to cherish the motions of the Holy Ghost on my soul; to watch

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against

against wandering of heart in religious duties; to make the glory of God and the salvation of my soul my chief business and aim, and the affairs of the world but as diversions to me, in my way heavenward. I also resolved to call myself daily to account for my conduct and frequently to write remarks on it. About this time, as I was travelling with my father, he, amidst other religious conversation, besought me to mind serious religion, now while I was young, as my life was very uncertain, and as there would be little probability of my turning to God in old age, after vicious habits had been long established: and to affect me the more, told me of an old gentleman of the episcopalian persuasion, who together with his son was once riding along with him, how he stooped on the way, and after exhorting, caused his son solemnly to engage to leave off his wonted companions and make my father, who was a dissenter, his daily associate,—saying, “mind religion, religion, in your youth, and do not as I have done. I have slighted many convictions, and now my heart is *hard and brawny*.” I was exceedingly affected with the old gentleman’s last words, “*my heart is hard and brawny*,” and had such an affecting sense of his dreadful state, that it engaged my heart all the rest of the way; and even while I was transacting business, I was fearfully alarmed, lest I should fall into such a state, which I considered as the greatest plague, that could be inflicted upon me. These impressions continued with me a considerable time. Not many weeks after, as I was walking in a church yard, I was led into a serious meditation on the different states of the dead, and on the vanity of all worldly enjoyments manifested by death. I retired behind one of the buttresses of the church, and poured out my soul to God, in earnest cries for his grace to enable me to live above the world, and to prepare me for an happy eternity.—My thoughts were so full of eternity that I did not care to think or speak of any thing else all that night.

—Soon,

—Soon after, on a night, on which our workmen had a yearly feast, I retired to the meadows; and by looking at the clear sky adorned with numberless stars, I was led to such views of the inward glories of heaven as powerfully attracted my desires to be in it. The serious impressions continued with me all the evening. Not long after I contracted an intimacy with a young man, whose apparent liveliness in religion was very remarkable, with whom, almost every week, I had the most delightful and edifying conversation, and who, after all, turned out a common drunkard.—*Let me not be high minded, but fear, and take heed lest I fall.*

Between 1710. and 1717, I had many ups and downs in religion,—sometimes lively workings of grace, holy fear and watchfulness, fervent love, warm desires, or comfortable hopes,—and at other times such levity and vanity of mind as brought on remissness in or even neglect of duty. My father, informing me of some late frowns of providence in his temporal affairs produced in me a very humble resignation to God's will, and prepared me for remarkable spiritual comforts, at the Lord's supper, in August this year. The *love of Christ to souls* being the subject of discourse, my soul was altogether inflamed by it. The enlightening and enlivening rays of the Holy Ghost drew out my faith and love into lively exercise, made me admire and adore his wonderful and astonishing love, and gave me some well grounded assurance that he loveth me as one of his children. Having spent the morning of a *public fast*, in solemn secret prayer, self-examination, meditation and self dedication, I found my self remarkably lively in the whole public service, which lasted six hours; and for many weeks I reaped great benefit to my soul from that days employment.

My father died May 2. 1719. In him I lost a loving father and friend, a wise and able counsellor, a faithful

a faithful guardian and monitor, and an excellent pattern of sobriety, watchfulness, self-denial, and diligence, particularly in his heavenly calling. He commonly rose by four in the morning, and spent *two or three* hours before the family rose, in reading, meditation, and prayer. His death greatly impressed my mind, and roused me out of that sloth and slumber, into which my intended marriage had betrayed me. I was deeply humbled for my sad neglects of secret duties; and renewed my resolutions to be more constant and conscientious in secret prayer, meditation, and self-examination. For a while I acted agreeably to such resolves; but, alas! the world had got possession of my heart, so that I soon returned to my former carelessness. In consequence of this too long continued in, I began to apprehend my self an hypocrite, and that all my religious profession had been but a mere shadow, without the substance; which threw me into no small agony of mind. At last, in 1721, by a sermon on Isa. lvii. 18, 19 *I have seen his ways and will heal him, &c.* the Lord caused me to hope, that he would not quite cast me off, nor be angry for ever. For some months the desires of my soul were more habitually after God, not without manifold imperfections, and even some neglects of private devotion. The prosperity of my worldly business occasioned much stirring of the love of the world in my heart, while the Lord stirred up my desires to resist and overcome my own worldliness and covetousness, and earnestly to seek after the true riches. On sabbath, October 22d, 1721. in my secret and family prayer, as well as in public, my hands were remarkably loosed. The Lord so intimated peace and pardon to my soul, as to humble me to the very dust before him, under a deep sense of my own sinfulness and unworthiness.

After many years of outward prosperity, it pleased God, in 1725, to afflict me with the loss of almost

most all my capital in trade, attended with several aggravating circumstances. Apprehensive of the fatal consequences hereof, I, especially by means of *Flavel's directions how to keep the heart*, was brought into a most submissive frame. I saw that God was doing me good by these impoverishing providences, and that, in answer to my prayers, they tended to render me humble and heavenly minded, and to render me more solicitous about my interest in God himself. And I was made to rejoice in them, and bless God for them. Some sermons which I heard, on these words, *Thou art my portion, O Lord*, administered great comfort and joy to my soul. I laboured after a most close walking with God, and I daily essay'd to say of, and to him, *Thou art my portion, O Lord*. I saw, that I had not suffered loss, but reaped the greatest gain; and that God, by his cross providences, was pursuing his great end of electing love for the mortification of my carnal affections, the strengthening of my faith in himself, and for leading me into close fellowship with himself, and ripening me for everlasting hereafter. He gave me the most comfortable evidence of his favour, and some foretastes of the heavenly blessedness. I could bless a *taking* as well as a *giving* God. — My fervour at last began to cool; and I began to remit my diligence, especially in solemn stated meditation, a duty which hath been so remarkably useful to my soul. My losses becoming still more and more threatening, I resolved to endeavour to justify God in whatever he should do with me; — to receive all my afflictions as coming from his fatherly hand; — to submit to all his dispensations; and to hope and trust in him, let him do what he would.

In November 1726, I had a remarkably pleasant view of the heavenly blessedness, as I was sitting up with a dying friend; — of the saints triumph over death; — of the rest which remains for them — of
their

their immediate enjoyment of God and perfect conformity to him;—and of their delightful fellowship with one another in their adoration of him. The view of a *monument* of a woman of my own age, about the same time, introduced a most awful consideration of the state of the damned, and delightful contemplation of an entrance into the heavenly mansions, attended with the most earnest breathings of soul after God and Christ,—after grace and glory.—God had retrieved my losses, and given me a year of considerable prosperity in trade; but a malignant fever in the place, by which twenty were sometimes cut off in one week, and eight were buried in one day, led me out to the most serious consideration of the different issues of death. On a sacramental occasion 1728, I was led out to a serious consideration of my ways, renewed acceptance of Christ in all his offices, and earnest prayer for supply of all my wants.—A sermon 1729, on the *Last judgment*, led me out to the most serious examination of myself with respect to my fitness to meet with it: Whether I did hate sin? Whether I loved God and Christ above all? Whether I did savingly believe in Christ?—and to an humbling review of my fearful short-comings in the proper evidences of all these *three* points.

I had for a long time, and especially of late been enabled, by God's grace, to walk closely and humbly with him; and had large experience of the assistance of his spirit in religious duties, and a remarkable clearness and certainty with respect to my saving interest in Christ. In 1732, a sermon on Psalm xviii. 23. *I have kept myself from mine iniquity*, led me to enquire what was my *predominant* lust. I saw that it was not uncleanness, covetousness, or malice, but *pride*, which discovered itself in my readiness to have my spirit ruffled by the awkwardness or unfaithfulness of my servants,—and in my ostentation of learning, piety, gifts of prayer, ex-

tent of trade, or acquaintance with gentlemen, when I had opportunity for it,—and resolved by God's grace to guard against this evil.——I was sometime after led with wonder and thankfulness, to think, how, and by what means, the Lord had changed the dispositions and inclinations of my heart from what they had once been.

In 1734, a walk in the *church-yard* led me to serious reflections on my own mortality, and the important change made by death, and on my safety, if either good or bad spirits should appear to me, since God was my friend and protector, his angels my guard; and I was quickly to join happy spirits in the eternal state—In 1735, the death of a child, and my consciousness of my frequent cordial dedication of her to the Lord, and reflection on the early buddings of God's grace in her behaviour, led me out to a delightful view of her happiness, and kindly submission to the Lord's removing her from me. Not long after, a walk amidst the grave stones in the church yard, led me out to think, what multitudes were buried and should rise again, perhaps 350,000 in Kidderminster church yard!—what multitudes then in the whole earth!—what work for multitudes of angels to gather together, and duly separate all these in the last day!—what happy re-union between all the bodies and souls of saints at the last day!—and what multitudes of sins shall be covered by the infinite love of Jesus the judge!

In 1737, a discourse on Psal. lxxiii. 25. *Whom have I in heaven but thee? and there is none upon earth that I desire besides thee;* led me, with uncommon care, to examine my evidences of grace:—Whether my heart was more set upon God than upon any worldly thing? Whether I prized him above all things, and studied to obey and please him above all? Whether in all my difficulties, I had recourse to him for supply, direction, strength, protection

and deliverance? Whether I eyed his hand in all events that befel me? Whether his comforts chiefly delighted my soul? And whether I chiefly aimed at the glorifying and enjoyment of him for ever, as my chief end in all that I did?—Another sermon on the *terrors of God's majesty* to guilty souls on Job xxiii. 15. led me to a serious consideration of my own past conduct, in which I observed how the fear of God had made me trample on all opposition and scorn from men;—how his goodness had led me to shun every thing displeasing to him;—yet, what omission or slight performance of religious duties;—what rustlings of Spirit;—what mispending of time I had been guilty of?—Another sermon on 2 Pet. iii. 18. *But grow in grace*, led me to another solemn trial of my own tempers, experiences and shortcomings. The rage of the small pox in my family, especially among my children, and the death of one of them, made me seriously to essay resignation to the will of God, and to think what comfortable evidence I had of the happiness of my deceased babe. But, alas! the impression too quickly wore off; and I fell into some indecent sallies of passion against some of my servants, the great wickedness of which the Lord discovered to me, as a hurting of my own soul,—a dishonouring of Christ and his gospel,—and pouring contempt on his and his Father's lively pattern, and command,—a fearful abuse of his great forgiveness,—and an unreasonable rendering of my fellows of mankind miserable.

On Jan. 1, 1738, I solemnly reviewed the mercies and sins of the preceding year, and resolved and begged grace to behave better in the present. —On a sacramental occasion my heart was in a very unsuitable frame: yet I could not but be persuaded, that I was ready through grace to yield a cheerful obedience to the Lord in all things, and to endure the most bitter sufferings for his sake.

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—The Lord gave me a most affecting view of the duty and great advantages of contentment, and of the folly and mischief of discontentment; and made me ashamed that I had so much indulged it.—

Some time after, he gave me a most affecting view of the uncertainty of my life, and certainty of my death; and whether I bade fair to have a pleasant and comfortable death, or one cloudy and terrible.

—Much about the same time, I was led out to delightful contemplation of the happiness of departed saints, particularly of my own father.

In 1739, I had a pleasant view of a good man's being *satisfied from himself*, in that—he hath accepted of his peace with God, hath secured his best, his everlasting interests;—is alway safe under God's protection and care; sees the fruits of his pious labours;—hath sweet secret converse with himself and with his God.—At a sacramental occasion, my desires to see Jesus were manifest and strong; and I obtained a delightful glimpse of his glory.—I was enabled to review the mercies, temporal and spiritual, with which the Lord had loaded me, in my married estate, during the twenty preceding years, and to think how I might by faith overcome all the difficulties of trouble, poverty, contempt, grief for the falls of children or the like, that I might meet with in the world.—In 1740, notwithstanding my constant hurry of business, I had some most delightful enjoyments and glimpses of my God, that eclipsed all created glories, and enabled me to look upon, and use worldly things with indifference, and might well confirm my trust in him in every case.—I also got a remarkable view of the shortness and uncertainty of my life,—of the importance of time, and of my own sad mispending of it,—and at the same time of my own uprightness and progress in the Lord's way.—On three sacramental occasions in 1741, I had remarkable views of my fellowship with Christ at his table; what he

gives to me ; and what I return to him ;—was enabled to dedicate myself to God, as my all-sufficient and all-suiting portion ;—and of my own sinfulness, particularly, my pride ;—and of my real hatred of it.

In 1742, I had a most delightful meditation upon Christ's being the hope of glory in believers. I considered that union of hearts and interests, which is between him and them, and the reciprocal communications which proceed from it ;—and how all their hope of glory is derived from it.——Not long after, I had my own hope tried by the fall of a frame of timber upon me. In that awful hour, when my life hung in suspense, how pleasant was that joyful assurance which I had, that death could not hurt me ; that my everlasting interests were secured ; and that God would provide for, and dispose of my widow and fatherless children in the best manner. In 1743 and 1744, on sacramental occasions, I had some delightful views of the nature and usefulness of the Lord's supper, and of my own right to it before God — I had also delightful views of the omniscience of God, as extending to all things, and particularly to me, and all my past, present, and future concerns.——After the death of our minister, Mr Bradshaw, in 1742, I and some others agreed to unite our prayers twice a week, that God would provide for us a *pastor after his own heart*, besides the many *public meetings for prayer* on that account. The Lord helped us to the most earnest pleadings and wrestlings with himself, and mightily refreshed and comforted our souls, and enabled us to believe in hope against hope, even when matters appeared most dark and desperate. At last, God in answer to our requests far outdid our warmest hopes and fondest expectations, in our congregation's unanimous choice of a minister who cheerfully accepted our call. And not long after, at our sacramental

eramental occasion, I enjoyed a most delightful view of Jesus Christ as *delivered for our offences* : --- O how it grieved me to see so many appear unaffected, while my heart burned within me, and my soul was altogether ravished with the views of my infinitely kind, my suffering Redeemer.

Between this time and 1755, he had repeated remarkable manifestations of the Lord's presence, especially at sacramental occasions. He had an uncommon desire to win souls to Christ, and no small success in his endeavours. In three years, seven appeared to be converted in his own family, nor, at that time, was there so much as one of his children or domestic servants that did not seem to fear God. By his serious discourses, closely applied to such as he occasionally met with, and by his prayers with them and letters to them, he was instrumental in the awakening, if not conversion, of severals of his neighbours. His letters to his relations and friends, on occasions of their marriage, affliction, or call to particular duties, are filled with the most proper expostulations, reproofs, consolations, encouragements, directions and motives to faith and holiness.

Falling ill on a journey, he wrote to his wife, " If the Lord will, I shall be at Kidderminster soon after this reaches your hands. But if it be his will, that I should never reach that dear place of my nativity, his will be done. It hath long been my earnest desire that I may have no other will than my Father's.—Indeed, my dearest, my heart is sensibly touched in respect of you; and yet you need not much wonder, if my thoughts appear to be much engrossed about my own self, my future self, my eternal self—Let my Father lay on me whatever sickness and pain he will, let me say with my whole heart, *Nevertheless not as I will, but as thou wilt.* But, how shall I enough thank and bless him, who, according to his abundant mercy, hath begotten me again unto a lively hope by the resurrection of Jesus

Jesus Christ from the dead?—a lively hope of an inheritance incorruptible, undefiled, and that fadeth not away, reserved in heaven for me?—and to a lively hope, that I am kept by the power of God through faith unto salvation?—and that herein I can greatly rejoice, though, now for a season, as need is, I am in heaviness through manifold trials.

“What could support my spirits, if I had hope in this life only? What though providence hath blessed me with more than enough to fulfil all my engagements? What though I have seen all my children comfortably settled? What though no man can be happier than I, in a dear, tender, dutiful wife? What can all these temporary comforts do for a dying man, were they ten times as many and comforting as they are.—Blessed are the dead, which die in the Lord,—that they may rest from their labours, and their works do follow them.—Shall I *die in the Lord*, united to Christ by faith, and firmly believing in him, as able and willing to save me to the uttermost?—Do I *live in the Lord*, and *to the Lord*? The life that I now live in the flesh, do I live by the faith of the Son of God? Do I do all that do, whether in word or deed, in the name of the Lord Jesus Christ? Do I, by lively actings of faith, receive all my furniture, assistance and supply out of his fulness? And do I all with an eye to his glory, continually devoting all that he doth, or shall bestow on me, to his service and disposal?—What works of mine shall follow me as evidences of my unfeigned faith in Christ, and sincere love to him? I humbly trust, there shall be not a few, particularly my relieving of disciples in the name of disciples. But I draw not my brightest evidences from what I have done for him; but from what he hath done for me, and in me, and by me. Certainly I experienced the mighty power of his grace, changing and renewing my heart, when about 17 or 18 years of age, drawing me to hate what I naturally loved,
and

and to love what I naturally hated.—Certainly, in numberless instances, he hath changed my heart with the smiles of his reconciled face, and enabled me to rejoice with joy unspeakable and full of glory,—and many times on account of immediate answers to my prayer. And the brighter and fuller the discoveries of his love have been, the more deeply have I been made to humble myself at his feet, and to abhor myself and repent as it were in dust and ashes. Nor is there any thing, I have been more desirous, or even ambitious of these many years, than always to ly at the foot of the cross of Christ, under the deepest sense, that I am nothing, have nothing, —and can do nothing,— and at the same time to see myself complete in him. Nor hath any consideration tended more to reconcile my spirit to this afflictive dispensation, than this hope, that the Lord in it is hearing my prayers for his making me more and more humble and resigned to his will. Let him therefore humble me, and spare not. But, Lord, give me submission ; give me patience ; give me always to see thy hand in every affliction ; give me to accept the punishment of my sins, and always to ly at thy feet without a murmuring word, or a repining thought.

“ My dearest, I write not these things to grieve you, but to glorify God. O how dear Christ is now to my soul ! I hope my Christian friends pray for me. I can do but little of that work for myself. But blessed be his name, I can cast myself at his feet, and say, I think with my whole heart, LORD, WHAT THOU WILT ; WHEN THOU WILT ; and HOW THOU WILT. The Spirit, I hope, beareth witness with my spirit, that I am a child of God ; and in many of my fellow Christians beareth the same witness.—What then remains for me, in all the residue of my days, but to extol and praise him, who hath saved me, and called me with an holy calling ;— hath given me to eat of the hidden manna ;
---hath

---hath given me a white stone, and in it a new name written, which no man knows but myself? O what is hell, to be deliver'd from, and to know that I am deliver'd! What is heaven, to be the place and state of our advancement, and to know that we are denizens of the new Jerusalem? Should I not I speak of him, and recommend his good ways to all around me, even while he is weakening my strength, and shortning my days? What though he afflict me in the most lingering and painful manner? Is it not enough, that in Christ Jesus the Lord, he hath made with me an everlasting covenant, order'd in all things and sure? This is all my salvation, and all my desire.

'Tis mine, the covenant of his grace,
And every promise mine;
All sprung from everlasting love,
And seal'd by love divine.

On my unworthy favour'd head
Its blessings all unite;
Blessings more num'rous than the stars,
More lasting and more bright,
Death, thou may'st tear this rag of flesh,
And sink my fainting head;
And lay my ruins in the grave
Among my kindred dead
But death and hell in vain shall strive
To break that sacred rest,
Which God's expiring children feel
When leaning on his breast.
Th' enlarged soul thou canst not reach
Not rend from Christ away
Though o'er my mould'ring dust thou boast
The triumphs of a day,
The night is past; my morning dawns:
My covenant God descends,

And

And wakes that dust to join my soul,
In bliss that never ends.

That covenant the last accent claims
Of this poor fault'ring tongue,
And **THAT** shall the first notes employ
Of my celestial song.

Farewel, my dearest. I hope to see you again.
But if not, all is well. We shall spend a long, a
joyful eternity, at our Father's house together---
Yet a *little while*, and we shall know ten millions
more than is yet known by your poor, loving, re-
joicing

JOSEPH WILLIAMS."

He came home about an hour after the above
letter was received, and died on the tenth day there-
after, Dec. 2d, 1755, aged 63.

II. Life of MARGARET ABERCROMBIE, a Girl near Alloa.

FROM her infancy she had been much subject
to trouble, which she laboured to conceal as
much as she could. Meanwhile, she behaved with
much gravity, appeared much inclined to every
thing good, and hated all vain and light company,
apparel, or fashions, being not a little burdened
with these things that were the delight of other
young women. About three months before her
death, her distemper became more and more threa-
tening. Perceiving herself dying, her fears exceed-
ingly increased, as she thought she could not believe
in, and love Jesus Christ, nor mourn for her
sin. Nevertheless she could not but own to her mo-
ther,

ther, that she earnestly desired to come to Christ, and to have him for her ALL IN ALL: and that she was grieved that she had not more love to him, and more hatred of, and sorrow for sin.

Mr. Allan Logan her minister, having hinted to her, in his alarming manner, how inexcusable she would be, if, after all the calls which the Lord had given her in ordinances and afflictions, and now, when he was seeming to give her the last call by an impending death, if she did not by faith lay hold and rest on Jesus Christ for salvation,—that word INEXCUSABLE made a deep impression on her spirit, and threw her into a fearful dread of God's having given her up to a reprobate mind, and an evil heart of unbelief, since notwithstanding her crying to him for faith in Christ and love to him, she could not get them, but felt her heart harder and harder. But by a conversation with Mr. Gray, minister of Dollar, concerning the marks of grace, and by a discourse of her father's chaplain from Isa. xli. 10. *Fear not, I am with thee: be not dismayed, for I am thy God: I will strengthen thee; yea, I will help thee; yea, I will uphold thee with the right hand of my righteousness,*—her soul was relieved from all its doubts, and her lips filled with commendations of Christ. She caused her mother read to her such passages of scripture, or even of other books as represented his excellencies, loveliness, and love.

On the Tuesday before her death, her heart being altogether ravished with discoveries of his sovereign grace and love to her soul, she, with joy unspeakable and full of glory, cried out, O! he hath opened my heart to receive the Saviour, that was before to shut! He hath passed by many much better than I, and hath shewed mercy to poor, worthless ME!—O what was I, a dog, that glorious Christ should have caused me to believe on himself, after I had so long slighted, and rejected, and hardened my heart against him! Nevertheless, he still waited

be gracious, and his grace hath pursued me, till at last it hath conquered and melted my heart, and subdued sin and Satan in me.—O ! stronger is he that is with me, and for me, than he that is against me ! —O ! O ! the love of God in sending his only begotten Son into the world, to bear his wrath for ME ! —To him that loved ME and washed ME from my sins in his own blood be praise, glory, and dominion for ever and ever, Amen. Blessed, blessed be the Lord, who hath sent such a Saviour into the world to save ME. I was obstinately rebellious, and hardened, and yet he hath made ME willing in the day of his power, and caused ME to believe. Glory to him, that he sought me, when I would never have sought him, and followed me till he found me, and brought me home to himself. O what he hath done for me ! and what change he hath wrought on me ! and now he will keep that which I have committed to him, till he present me spotless before his Father, and set me down among the elders, and put the song of praise to God and the Lamb, into my mouth. O lovely, lovely, lovely Jesus Christ ! Glory, glory, to God for HIM. O he is faithful ! he hath fulfilled all his promises to me ! —O friends, flee all to Christ. Ye will never repent it. O do it speedily. The sooner the better. Wherever you be, he invites you to himself. Do not fear to trust him ; he is faithful, and will perform his word.

Next day, she continued in much the same frame of spirit, crying, Lord Jesus, come quickly : shew me thy salvation : receive me to glory, —to thyself, —and present me before the Father. —I had fainted, unless I had believed to see the glory of God. —I beseech thee, shew me thy glory. —I see so much. —I feel so much, that I cannot contain it ; I cannot express it ! —O he is precious ! O he is glorious ! O he is a full Saviour ! he is altogether lovely ! —O what am I, that I should be set down with the Father before his throne, and behold his glory, and

sing forth his praise to all eternity. — Longing for her father's coming from Edinburgh she said, O if he were come, that I might tell him, what the Lord hath done for my soul. But if death comes first, it shall be welcome: for I am not sorry to part with all the world, to part with friends, father and mother. — Christ makes up all. He was no sooner come, than she pleasantly related to him how the sorrows of death and pains of hell had compassed her about: and how the Lord had delivered her; — and, in infinite mercy, shined into her heart; — had discovered to her the fulness, suitableness and glory of Christ; and made her heart cheerfully willing to receive him. After she had spoken a long time on this subject, he hinted to her, that she might be weary and inclined to take rest. No, said she, my soul is at rest already: and my body will soon get quiet rest in the grave. — I would not for ever so much return again to the world: for what is in the world but sin and temptations to sin? I am going where there is no sin, — no temptation, no affliction, — no sorrow, — no desertion.

Mr. Gray coming in, she besought him, to bless and praise the Lord, that it was not with her, as when she saw him last. O he hath been kind to my soul. Free grace hath loosed my hands, and set me at liberty. I do not fear, but he will love me, and take me to heaven. But O his presence is sweet and comfortable! I would fain have it continued with me, while I am on earth. — I have a battle to fight with death: but Christ hath died and risen again, and so shall I. — I see now, I have a right to all the purchase of Christ. All is mine. O how willingly I die! Come, Lord Jesus, come quickly. — I am ready to go out to meet the Bridegroom. I bless the Lord that I am dying. — I would not desert the name of a Christian, if I did not prefer being with Christ to every thing else. — Blessed be the Lord.

that spared me till he discovered himself to me, and showed me his salvation: for if I had died sooner, where had I been to-day?—Mother, your former hopes of me were ill founded. I was indeed grave and sober; but I had as hard and proud a heart as any. Since I was *seven* years old, I doubted if I belonged to the election of grace. But, blessed be God, these things are all over with me. —O to be in heaven where there is no sin, no sorrow, no temptation, no desertion, —nothing but joy! —If it be so sweet to see him through lattices, what will be the full views of him face to face, —to be *for ever with the Lord*, —and to walk with him in white!

Upon Thursday she fell under strong temptations to suspect all that she had met with, had been but a delusion; but was enabled to cry mightily to the Lord, that he would strengthen her faith, keep her from temptation, restore his sensible presence to her soul, cast out hardness of heart and fears of death. Messrs L. and G. having told her, that it was very ordinary for Christians to meet with such temptations, after remarkable manifestations; and that the Lord might be graciously, though not *sensibly*, present with her; and that it was not his sensible presence, but the doing and dying of Jesus Christ, her elder brother, laid hold on by faith, that ought to be the foundation of her hopes. She replied, I have great peace in the review of his former discoveries of himself, though I have not alway his sensible presence; but the shakings of faith are heavy. But God is the God of peace, and he is my peace. —After exhorting all in the house to seek the Lord, and to fear him; and particularly her eldest brother to remember his Creator in the days of his youth; and representing to him his undone state by nature, and his duty towards God and his parents; —and solemn prayer for the whole family, she caused read Mat. xxv. to her, and then with rapturous joy said, Well may I say of glorious Christ, that I was hungry

hungry and he gave me meat; his own flesh and blood, which are meat indeed and drink indeed. I was a stranger and he took me in:—naked and he clothed me with his white raiment: I was sick and he visited me: I was in prison, and he came and loosed my bonds, and said, O prisoner of hope, go free!—O how sweetly and powerfully these scriptures, *Him that cometh unto me, I will in no wise cast out. He hath made with me an everlasting covenant, ordered in all things and sure; and this is all my salvation and all my desire. My grace is sufficient for thee:*—were borne in on my heart.

On Saturday morning, being troubled with another temptation, she said, Hath the Lord done so much for me, and brought me this length, and shall Satan make me despair? Lord, rebuke him, and give me victory over his temptations. He tempted Christ. No wonder that he tempt me.—O lift up the light of thy countenance on my soul! strengthen my faith when I am now going through the valley of the shadow of death, and fighting the last battle!—O my soul, return to thy rest; for the Lord hath dealt bountifully with thee. Into thy hands, O Lord, I commit my spirit.—I thought the battle would have been harder, and I am dying sweetly without either fear or pain. Thus she expired, January 23, 1720, about the 13th of her age.

III. NOTES from the DIARY and LETTERS of a young Man, who died 1720.

By means of my religious education, and especially by the kind strivings of his Spirit, it pleased the Lord often to awaken my soul, during my

my childhood, and to shew me my sins and my need of Christ above everything else. But these convictions commonly wore off in a little time. By these scriptures, John iii. 18, 36. *He that believeth not is condemned already. He that believeth not shall not see life, but the wrath of God abideth on him.* And Mark xxi. 16. *He that believeth not shall be damned,* I had spiriting convictions of the dreadful nature of my unbelief, but not such as drove me to Christ. I had also lasting convictions of my spiritual pride. Tho' I was the worst in the world, yet I thought myself better than others, and thought my pitiful performance of duties merited something at the hand of God. I occupied myself in judging others, when I ought to have judged myself. I was ready to lay hold on conditional promises as Mat. v. 6. *Blessed are they that hunger and thirst after righteousness, for they shall be filled,* as applicable to myself.

After this the Lord was graciously pleased, by means of sermons powerfully applied to my heart, to bring me to himself, so that I hope I can safely say, that I love and desire him for his own loveliness, and for his love, pity and patience towards sinners, especially towards me, the most vile and provoking of them all;—and that he has been drawing me nearer and nearer to himself, though but very slowly, and with many turnings back. Going abroad to school, from under the strict eye of my godly parents, I met with many temptations to folly and wickedness, and too readily complied. But, on my return home, God restored to me his presence and assistance, particularly in prayer, and in the close application of such texts as Isa. i. 18. *Come now, and let us reason together, saith the Lord, tho' your sins be as scarlet, they shall be white as wool, &c.* 1 John i. 9. *If we confess our sins, He is faithful and just to forgive us our sins and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness.* Returning to school, the many temptations answerable to my years being renewed,

newed, the gracious impressions which I had received, gradually decreased, notwithstanding the piety and care of my master, and his particular care of me, with respect to my spiritual concerns ; —notwithstanding godly prayers, singing of psalms, and reading of the scriptures three times every day, stated catechising every week, and powerful preaching every Sabbath. Nevertheless, in secret prayer, solitary walks, and sometimes in conversation with fellow scholars, I had some pleasant experiences of the power of God.—After my return home, God, as it were, renewed his work on my soul. Two hints that my father mentioned in his sermon, viz. *That every man is either God's servant or Satan's slave, and he that is but an almost Christian is no Christian ; That hopefulness is an encouragement to go on, but not at all to stand still in religion,* were exceedingly useful to me.—Under a remarkable influence of God's Spirit, I solemnly devoted myself to the Lord, resolving to be wholly and only his, and to make his glory my chief end in every thing I did.—Another expression of my Father's, viz. *That persons often resolve to amend their lives, but for want of renovation of heart, quickly return to their former negligence,* led me to perceive the reason of my instability in religion, and led me out to earnest prayer for God's further renovation of my heart, and for the teaching and indwelling of his Spirit.—I hope I have received Christ as my prophet, priest and king : but ah ! how barren am I under all God's mercies !

In 1712, the 14th year of his age, he writes, By the blessing of God on the sermon this day, I have essayed to give up myself wholly, freely, and irrevocably to Father, Son and Holy Ghost. Through grace, I have been enabled to count the cost, and am resolved, by his assistance, to be the Lord's, come what will.—My great grief is, that when I have been highly engaged with him on his own day, yet

yet the very next day I am as bad as before. He is
a jobber with my father, what his thoughts in
religious duties, and out of the devotion of my heart,
— I find it a hard matter to keep my heart with God,
under the diversion of so many objects. But the
Holy Ghost, in a deep heart, in a manner, con-
vinces me of my sins, particularly in ungrateful
departing from such a kind and gracious God. —
I find Satan and my own heart enticing me to a to-
tal neglect, or slight performance of duty. — Thro'
my own carelessness I have enjoyed very little of God
this last week. The my resolutions in his strength
were as strong last Sabbath as ever, yet how sadly
have I declined. — Blessed be God, I have had much
more of his presence this last week than in that be-
fore. I have been enabled to leave God with some
proper reverence and filial fear. I have also felt a
greater sorrow for sin; and more spiritual minded-
ness in duty. — Being encouraged by Mark iii. 10, I
efforted to pray; but Satan, in an uncommon man-
ner, distracted my mind by vain thoughts. This
made me look more earnestly to God, and lean
wholly on his strength. — My duties this week have
been very coldly performed. Often when I am
most vigorously engaged with God, my heart runs
into some vanity or other. This cost me many a
sigh and groan; but there is a pleasure in sorrow
for sin. — My heart was full of love to God, and hat-
red of sin, as committed against him. I thought I
was the most ungrateful sinner in the world.

In 1743, I almost tremble to say, that the Lord's
so frequent returns to me, cause me to be less con-
cerned for his withdrawals. I am now forty
years old. Alas, that I have spent so much time so
little to God's glory and my own spiritual advantage,
notwithstanding his gracious dealing with me so many

I need not say, that I will give up all that I have
yet owned to him, and will begin again to be
N. B. The several divisions in this and following pa-
ragraphs, ordinarily contain his particular Review of his
case on Lord's day.

ly and so constantly !—Having hurried over my morning prayer, I presently found the inward liveliness of my soul decaying ; but, in the latter part of the week, I enjoyed much of the teaching of the Spirit : but my frame hath been very inconstant. Now, my spirits have been raised high, and inflamed with love to God ; and then, almost in a quarter of an hour, as flat and low as the earth.—When my heart is engaged in prayer or in hearing God's truths, Satan sometimes brings in some vile thought to frighten me, or some diverting one, and that brings on another : then I catch myself in them, and labour to be more attentive to my duty : but ere I am aware, my heart is roving again. These things make my enjoyments of God so short. My sins force him away.—Notwithstanding considerable enlargement of heart just before,—during my partaking of the Lord's supper, I was for some time under sad torment of conscience by Satanical harrassments. But, going home, and encouraged by Psalm l. 15. I applied myself to prayer, and had a remarkable discovery of God's love to my soul, and much inward peace of conscience and joy in the Holy Ghost.—This week, I have had some displays of God's grace and communications of his love, and been enabled to set the Lord before me. I have found more warmth in prayer, more sweetness in meditation, and more sorrow for sin : and my prayers for the souls of my relations, and for the church of God have been more earnest.—The word of God read or preached comes to me with more sweetness and quickening power than formerly.—Yesterday, in a journey, I had a most pleasant view of the love, and universal loveliness of Christ ; and my meditation and fellowship with God were, in a great measure, free from interruption or distraction.—Satan, especially after I have had intimate communion with God, labours to his utmost to puff up my pride. But these proud thoughts are my torment and burden.

den. I had rather, as the instrument of his Spirit, win over some poor souls, by plain gospel truths in an obscure place, with humility, than by *oratory* and *rhetoric* gain the applause and esteem of the learned; and so be puffed up with pride.—After much prayer and meditation in the preceding week, I have had the most ravishing fellowship with God, and been enabled clearly to view Christ, as my Lord and Saviour; and God in him, as my reconciled Father, and to look on heaven, happiness, and all spiritual blessings, as mine through Christ, as made of God to me *wisdom, righteousness, sanctification, and redemption*.—I had a most lively frame in some solemn preparation for the Lord's supper.—To my great grief and shame, my experiences this week, after my solemn dedication of myself to the Lord at his table, have been little else than of the deceitfulness and inconstancy of my heart, of the prevalence of my corruptions,—notwithstanding I have mourned over them. Yet I find, that if once corruptions get loose from their chain, it is very hard to bring them under again.—This week has been neither day nor night to my soul. This is not the way to grow in grace. I am ashamed to look up to God, with whom I so trifle by inconsistent carriage.—While I have had a relation under sore distress, I have had a reviving and comfortable week of communion with the Father, and with his Son Jesus Christ.

In 1714, as I was meditating in the field, I enjoyed such a measure of the inward peace of God, as enabled me, with pleasure, to behold God in all his works of creation and providence; but especially in that of redemption.—In the beginning of the preceding week, I became faint and lukewarm; but the Lord shewed me the sinfulness of my ungrateful departures from himself, and made me to mourn bitterly over them. And in this, especially at the Lord's table, my heart hath burned with love to, and desire after him.—In the two last days of the 18th

year of my age, I had most remarkable fellowship with God in meditation and prayer.—Lately I have been in trouble, not without good hope, thro' grace alone, of an happy exit by death: but being now somewhat recovered, the impresson goes much off my spirit. I cannot be satisfied with going forward and backward by turns, but would have *weekly*, nay *daily* progress in my way heavenward.—On a journey, I had a most comfortable day of contemplation of *Salvation by grace, free grace*.—Last week, I had not that sweet communion with God, which I have sometimes enjoyed; but had an earnest longing for it. Nor have I yet recovered that lively relish of spiritual things, which I had sometime ago.—This week, I have had an uncommonly humbling view of my innumerable defects in spiritual things, and barrenness under ordinances, and spiritual opportunities; but especially of the strength of my indwelling sin, in prompting me to sins, in opposing the work of grace, and grieving the Spirit of God,—and a most bright display of the grace of God in Christ, as my propitiation and advocate,—which led me out to the most earnest wrestling with him for the pardon of all my sins, and cleansing of my soul.—After I had resolved on some solemn prayer, something frivolous coming in my way, made me first delay it and then neglect it; which issued in a sad decay of inward liveliness. But, by meditation on my own sinfulness, ingratitude and inconstancy, and on the patience, love, and faithfulness of God, my heart was again warmed; and I was made to improve Jesus Christ for pardon and purification.—After some time of bodily distress, and fearful struggling with my indwelling corruptions, I saw that the Lord would certainly deliver me at last. And I thought, I would be willing to have all my sins published before angels and men, that the infinite and almighty grace of Christ might be manifested in me.

And

And, ashamed of all my duties, I rested on him alone.—After I had been at the Lord's table, Satan, the very next day, decoyed me to a trivial diversion, which threw me into a lukewarm frame of spirit.—But, after much tossing and vanity of mind in religious duties, I was led to bewail my want of due spiritual growth, and at last enjoyed remarkable fellowship with God.

In 1715, I had some lively exercise of faith at the Lord's table, and rejoiced that Christ receiveth sinners, and eats with them, and provides the wedding robe of his own righteousness for them.—Oh ! if I had a new heart to begin this year with !—I found that I loved Christ's word, his image, his government, his company, his service, his house.—Falling into some levities with a merry companion, my soul was hereby much wounded for some days. But, after much bewailing of my conduct, the Lord returned his smiles to my soul, and made me rest on Christ, and rejoice in his settlement of salvation by *grace*.—During the rest of this year, I had some turns of inward liveliness, but they quickly wore off. What an abject life I lead, being so much at a distance from my God ! How mean are all my actions for want of affections set on things above ?—How much of my conduct is from no principle ?—And how little with respect to the great designs of eternity ?

In 1716, alas, what a change to the worse I now feel ! Last year, what holy fears ! what genuine workings of a tender conscience ? what a sense of sin ? what fears of God's displeasure ? what jealousies over my own heart ? what confessions to God, and cries for his Spirit and grace ? But now, I am quite unconcerned. Though my heart be hard as a rock,—a mystery of iniquity,—how little I am affected ! Ah ! what have I done ? I have grieved and quenched the Spirit, dealt basely with my God, and crucified my Saviour afresh ! What could God have done
more

more for me? What could I have done more against him? I am in earnest only about trifles; and trifle with every thing spiritual and eternal.—After much sinful fear, the Lord, by Rom. v. 1. filled me with joy and peace in believing. The smiles of my reconciled God made me look down with disdain on every worldly thing.—After manifold changes, the Lord again turned my captivity, and surprized me with his richest mercy. Prayer was my pleasure; the word of God my agreeable entertainment; and heavenly meditation my sweetest refreshment. O Jesus! how should I love thee! how should I serve thee!

In 1717, after being sometimes lifted up, and sometimes cast down, I, on a solemn review, perceived how matters were going with me.—Ah!—how much worse than it was three or four years ago? THEN I remember how serious I was; and how intent upon the business of religion; how I made conscience of every part of my duty; how faithful I was in the discharge of the most secret duties of religion; and how observant I was of the most spiritual part of it; how zealous I was after frequent communion with God. I loved God and enjoyed most ravishing discoveries of his love to me.—But now, duties are neglected; my heart is vain and hard; the exercises of religion have no relish; guilt dwells upon me, and makes me turn from God; though I see the sadness of my case, I cannot stir from it; my heart is so hard, that it cannot be affected; my inward powers are so weakened, that I cannot reform; and, for the most part, my prayer is restrained before God.—At last, the Lord hath had pity on my soul, and hath refreshed, strengthened, and humbled me; and made me, with much sorrow for my apostacy, to seek after the Lord.

In 1718, I have been in so many different tempers, that, in general, I cannot tell whether it be better or worse with me. Oh that I had but improved

proved the many helps, the fair opportunities, and sweet assistances of the Spirit of God, for my own growth in grace ! how knowing in spiritual things ; how mortified to the world ; how conversant in heaven ; and how happy in acquaintance with God, might I have been ?—Nay, what have I been in comparison of what I am now ! Alas ! that when my pious father and sister are dead, I should have lived these *seven* years, only to lose my peace with God, and to become unprepared for and afraid of death ?

In 1719, ah, my heart ! It is a world of iniquity. Of late it is more so than formerly ; and it will be so, I fear, as long as I live. O when shall I be delivered from the body of this death ?—Oh ! my sins ! they reach to the heavens ; and I am ready to sink under their weight. Oh ! my backslidings ! my perpetual backslidings !—the Spirit grieved, quenched, and resisted ; Christ crucified afresh again and again ! I feel the Spirit withdrawing and ceasing his workings. What knowledge have I sinned against ! What a profession have I turned my back on ! What grace have I abused ! I dread that God is just going to swear in his wrath, that I shall never enter into his rest. I look on myself as a vain pretender, a forward talker, but unacquainted with the spirit of the kingdom,—having my tongue well turned to say, LORD, LORD, but with no heart to love and serve him.—But at times, I am made to see relief for me, in the infinite grace, and all cleansing blood of Christ, *Exod. xxxiii. 18. Eph. iii. 19. and v. 2. John vi. 37. and vii. 37, 38. Isa. lv. 1. Rev. xxii. 17.*—O blessed be God for my views of *free grace* and the gospel. No other set of principles could ever free me from the fears of death. My sins, after I had received the knowledge of his grace, often discourage me. But, by 1 Sam. i. 20. Jer. iii. 5, 22. and by Hos. xiv. &c. I am encouraged to come back to him.—After my season of dejection, he hath opened my eyes to discern
Christ

Christ in his word ; he overcomes my heart, and makes me, with trembling, cry, *Lord, I believe, help thou my unbelief*. It is like hell to my soul, to think of being separated from, and an enemy to Christ.—It is well for me, that none knows all my vileness and wickedness, but he who hath infinite compassion, infinite love and unchangeable grace ; and who, notwithstanding his infinite highness and holiness, can love, can always love, and for ever dwell in me,—the Holy Ghost dwells in me as Lot in Sodom,—daily grieved, vexed, and quenched in me. And, must he go out of me at last ?—I cannot endure the thought of *Christ's not being MINE* ; or of *me being his enemy*. No ; he is my beloved, sure ; my best beloved still.—Tell him that I am sick of love.

In times of sickness and prospects of death, I have alway found God near unto me, and good to my soul. In my present approaches to death, all is well ; old times are brought over again, such days as I never expected to see again in this world. God makes himself near to me, communes with me at times, and I hold communion with him, and we are now as familiarly conversant as ever. I have no taste or relish for any worldly enjoyment. The certain symptoms of death I carried in myself, were a great spring of comfort and pleasure to me. Notwithstanding all the inconstancy and treachery of my heart, an opening prospect of heaven being presented before me, the world and all things in it vanish and shrink to nothing. God and religion are ALL. My spirit is fervent and violent for his kingdom. Then how I love my God !

IV. MEMOIRS

IV. Life of ELISABETH CAIRNS.

MY parents being persecuted for their adherence to our covenanted presbyterian principles of religion, my life was endangered in my mother's womb, as well as after my birth; but God preserved it.—In the 3d and 4th years of my age, I had my soul so delightfully impressed with the glorious excellencies of God in Christ, that the Lord's day became pleasant, and the diversions of children altogether tasteless to me.—Not long afterward, I fell from the top of a rock with a deep ditch at the foot of it, in which I should certainly have been drowned, had not providence stopped me by my getting hold of a bush on the face of the rock. This danger much alarmed my conscience, and made me think more seriously of hell than ever I had done, and which I dreamed was rendered most dreadful by the wrath of God being executed there.

Through want of a school within reach, and my parents groundless imaginations that very early instruction of children was improper, I, to my great hurt, was not taught to read the Bible, till I was about eight years of age. But while men neglected me, God himself instructed me, and gave me an affecting view of my own sinfulness and misery, and of Jesus Christ and his salvation, and kindled in my soul a love to, and desire after him. When, at last, I began to read, I carried about my book with me, and got lessons from such as I could procure them, while I attended my father's sheep: and, meditating on what I read, I was filled with surprize and wonder.

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About

About the tenth year of my life, the Lord began to favour me with more distinct views of my lost condition by nature, and of the new covenant remedy of it. Particular passages of scripture suited to my case were powerfully darted into my conscience and heart, such as Prov. xv. 8. "The prayer of the wicked is an abomination to the Lord: but the prayer of the upright is his delight." Hos. vi. 3. "Then shall we know, if we follow on to know the Lord: his going forth is prepared as the morning" Prov. viii. 17. "I love them that love me, and they that seek me early shall find me." The four gospels, the song of Solomon, the prophecies of Isaiah, and the Psalms, many of which I learned by heart, and sung by myself while I waited on my flock, were exceedingly pleasant to me. When, in my reading, I met with passages which I could not understand, I earnestly intreated the Lord to open mine eyes, that I might see the wonders of his law; and, in answer to my requests, had it made a light unto my feet, and a lamp to my path; and, under this illuminating influence, O what pleasure I felt in reading the scriptures, and in secret prayer, and in joining with my fellow-shepherds, as we occasionally met in the fields, in prayer and singing of psalms.

Observing one day a stalk of corn in the field higher than myself, I wept bitterly, that, when it had grown upward so much in a few months, I had grown so little heavenward in more than ten years. Another day, I was so impressed with fear, lest the curse of God should have been annexed to my food, that I carried about my bread, which I had with me, a whole day, without daring to taste it.—Not long after, when I came to a well, and, in my usual manner, was asking God's blessing on the water which I intended to drink, he opened my understanding to perceive his curse removed from me, and my enjoyments through Christ's becoming a curse for me, and

and to see his common mercies coming to me, in the channel of the new covenant. This made my draught of water more pleasant than the choicest wine. Another day, while I waited on my sheep, at the side of a snow-wreath, I lay down and prayed,—and, O the inexpressible discoveries of divine and everlasting things which I enjoyed! O! how gladly would my enraptured soul have launched forth into the immediate, the eternal enjoyment of God!—At other times, while I meditated on the mysteries of the new covenant, I was so transported with ravishing wonder, that I knew not where I was, nor whither I was going: and meanwhile God regularly directed both me and my flock. The singing of the birds also stirred up my heart to sing praises to my God. When I beheld the clouds covering the sun, after he had shone brightly for a little, my heart was altogether inflamed with longing desires for that everlasting day, when Jesus Christ, the sun of righteousness, should for ever shine on my soul without interruption. As, during the seven years of famine in the end of last century, I had but a very scanty allowance of food, and behoved to give part of it to my neighbour shepherdess, who had sometimes had nothing of her own for a whole day,—I, in the extremity of my hunger, sometimes ate grass, and, by the blessing of God, was refreshed with it. And, O the sweet hours of prayer and singing of psalms that she and I had together in the fields!—On the whole, though by my constant attendance on my flock by day from the 5th to the 16th year of my life, I was deprived of the public ordinances of God, and had but little human instruction, I was graciously enlightened by God himself.

The three following years of my life, and especially the fourth, proved to my soul, as it were, an heaven upon earth. Being taken from the sheep by my parents, I could not keep company, nor fol-

low the work of the house like my sisters, without marring, as I thought, my habitual fellowship with God, which I preferred to every thing on earth.—When my parents, who knew not the condition of my soul, observed my awkwardness, and my apparent aversion to worldly business, they spoke somewhat harshly to me. But God, by a powerful application of these texts, Psalm cxlii. 4, 5. “All refuge failed me, no man cared for my soul, then I said, Thou, Lord, art my refuge and my portion in the land of the living.” Isa. xxxiii. 16. “Bread shall be given him, and his water shall be sure,”—comforted me against grief on every side. Moreover, when my parents understood the case of my soul, they helped and encouraged me,

I had now access to the public ordinances of God, but our minister’s method of preaching did not at all correspond with the frame and experiences of my soul. But my parents taking me with them to a sacramental occasion at some distance. I was pleasantly surprized to find the sermons exactly answerable to my case. These on the Saturday from Jer. xxx. 21. “Who is this that engageth his heart to approach unto me, saith the Lord?” and from John iii. 18. “God so loved the world, that he gave his only begotten Son, that whosoever believeth on him should not perish, but have everlasting life,”—were powerfully applied to my heart. On Sabbath morning, I fell under an inward damp: but in partaking of the Lord’s supper, I was altogether overwhelmed with the consolations of the Holy Ghost, the illuminating impression of which continued with me for half a year. And O what pleasant days and nights I had in prayer, and in reading my Bible. But still my spiritual goings were up and down, in proportion to my sensible experiences of the Lord’s kindness.

In the beginning of the next year, after a new damp, I attended another sacramental occasion, at
which,

which, on the Sabbath morning, I had my bands remarkably loosed in secret prayer, and my soul filled with inexpressibly ravishing foretastes of the eternal glory; and through the whole work of the day, walked in the light of God's countenance, and returned home greatly revived and strengthened in my inward man.—But, using to try myself by what I heard in sermons, I soon found that I had not experienced such a law work as seemed necessary to conversion. This, attended by the Lord's withdrawment of the sensible light of his countenance, made me raze all my persuasions of the goodness of my state, or reality of my religious experiences. Amidst this distress, God, more than ever, enlightened my mind in the knowledge of my sinful condition and undone state by nature, and of the alone way of recovery through Christ. After manifold tossings and fearful distress of soul attending my repeated attempts to discover the truth of grace in me, and the saving reality of my former experiences, which I was extremely loth to give up with, as all a mere delusion,—I, in secret prayer, obtained a most ravishing deliverance. O what glory I beheld in the inexpressible mysteries of redemption through Christ! and with what transporting delight I was enabled to read my name written in the Lamb's book of life! The sensible impression of this divine visit remained on my soul for a whole year. And meanwhile, I had from time to time repeated discoveries of my reconciled God in Christ, as it were, face to face, and yet my life was preserved.

In the beginning of the following year, O how powerfully the Holy Ghost operated on my soul!—The law of his mouth was better to me than thousands of gold and silver! With amazing ardour my heart cried to him, *Whom have I in heaven but thee? and there is none on earth that I desire besides thee.*

God

God is the strength of my heart, and my portion for ever. My inward powers were so transported with these views, that I did not know where I was, or what I was doing. And while I thus by faith beheld the glories of heaven, how ardently my soul longed and panted to enter in !——Finding that the heavenly ravishments rendered company and my earthly business distasteful to me, I besought the Lord, that he would endow me with one capacity to hold intimate familiarity with himself, and another to execute my worldly business. He remarkably granted my request, that, even on the harvest field, where I was inseparably connected with vain companions, I darted up short prayers to heaven, when I was casting my handfuls into the sheaf, and had my soul filled with the heart captivating rays of Jesus' glory and the sensible manifestations of his love, that my habitual intercourse with God rendered me deaf to all the idle language of my fellow-labourers : and meanwhile my hands were guided to manage my sickle aright.

One Sabbath morning, I got such ravishing discoveries of the covenants of works and grace, that I was obliged to summon all the creatures of God to assist me in the praises of my God, my Saviour. And, when I returned from my retirement, I found it necessary to restrain myself from calling out to my parents and sisters, by laying my hand on my mouth. Another day, while, in my usual manner, I was asking God's blessing on the portion of scripture which I intended to read, I was so transported with the manifested glory of the mysteries of the new covenant, that I could read none, but fell to prayer and praise. About the same time, after a sad inward damp on the preparation Saturday, I, on the morrow after, particularly at the Lord's table, enjoyed a most ravishing foretaste of the heavenly happiness, and of my eternal enjoyment of it.

One day, I inconsiderately prayed that the Lord would, even on earth, make my heart act as fully, freely, and unweariedly in the exercises of holiness as ever it had done in the way of sin. Though, according to his purpose and method of salvation, it was necessary that my compleat perfection in grace should be reserved for the life to come, yet he so far granted my request, that, for some time, I found it more easy to fix my heart upon heavenly than upon earthly things. When I fell asleep, I left my heart fixed upon God, and when I waked I was still with him. For almost a whole year, I found little opposition from my indwelling lusts, and knew not what it was to be straitened in prayer, or to be much troubled with vain thoughts in religious duties. O how pleasantly my soul was swallowed up in the transforming views of Jesus Christ and his new covenant!—How self, in every form, was debased, and free grace exalted!—How my heart was weaned from worldly enjoyments!—I desired nothing of them but bread convenient for me.—I saw, I felt, that one half hour of familiar fellowship with God as MY GOD and MY ALL, afforded more joy, more pleasure and profit, than the whole world could ever produce.

But, in the 20th year of my life, after some warnings by scriptures impressed on my mind, I was deprived of these sensible comforts, and fell under fearful clouds of divine desertion, attended by a dreadful swell of the great depth of indwelling corruptions and horrible rage of Satanical temptations. Temptations to disbelieve the being of God,—to cast away my Bible as an imposture,—and to murder myself, and the like;—together with the raging carnality of my heart in religious duties, and my ignorance of a life of faith on God's word, when I had so much need of it,—made me weary of my life, and were like to have rendered me distracted; and had certainly done so, had not the Lord, on
some

some occasions, darted into my soul some of his supporting words of grace.

After four years of almost constant fearful distress on my soul, I had my bands loosed, and, in secret prayer and meditation, was made to see and sing as in the days of my youth ; but these sensible visits of the Lord to my soul were but of short continuance. Meanwhile, I reflected on my late condition, and was ashamed that I had so distrusted his word, doubted of his love, and in some measure parleyed with Satan's temptations. From this he took the opportunity to charge me with committing the sin against the Holy Ghost, and that never a real saint had rebelled against the Lord as I had done. But, by his powerful application to my heart of these scriptures, John i. 7. "The blood of his Son Jesus Christ cleanseth from all sin." Mic. vii. 18, 19. "Who is a God like unto thee, that pardoneth iniquity, and passeth by the transgression of the remnant of his heritage : he retaineth not his anger for ever, because he delighteth in mercy. He will turn again ; he will have compassion on us : he will subdue our iniquities : and thou wilt cast all their sins into the depths of the sea." Heb. vii. 25. "He is able to save to the uttermost them that come unto God through him, seeing he ever liveth to make intercession,"—the Lord enabled me, for a time, to go on my way rejoicing ; but not as in the 19th year of my life : for I was still deprived of such over-powering influences of the Holy Ghost as I had formerly enjoyed ; and I continued still very ignorant of the exercise of faith, for drawing food to my soul from the promises of the gospel.

To add to my misery, I could reap no edification from the public or private administration of our minister, notwithstanding much wrestling with God for the same. After many inward struggles relative to my duty in these circumstances, and by God's impressing

impressing his promise of food and raiment on my soul, I, for the sake of my spiritual edification, left my parents and went to Stirling, where I had opportunity of hearing Mr. Brisbane (a most practical and evangelical preacher). On the very first Sabbath, God loosed my bands by the sermon, which promoted the recovery of my body from the sore trouble under which I had been. O what pleasure I found in comparing my former experiences with the sweet and powerful ministration of the gospel which I now enjoyed, and in observing the exact correspondence between them ! But still the want of the wonted smiles of the Lord's countenance so pained my heart, that my life was a burden to me. When I began to despair of ever again enjoying them, the Lord Jesus suggested to my soul, that he *would bring me into the wilderness and speak comfortably to me ;— give me the valley of Achor for a door of hope, and make me sing as in the days of my youth*, Hos. ii. 14, 15. At length, while I was crying to him to put an end to my seven years jealousies of his love, he discovered himself as suited to all my needs, and my soul was enabled to consent to all that I saw or heard of his grace and love ; and my heart was so powerfully drawn forth towards him, that my mortal constitution could scarcely bear up under the delightful ardour of my affections. For some time, particularly in hearing the gospel, I was, as it were, swallowed up in the immediate views of the glory of God as my God in Christ ; and the more I saw or felt of Jesus Christ and his fulness, the more earnestly I hungered and thirsted for further manifestations of him. One day my desires were so ardent, that, finding my natural life ready to sink under them, I was obliged to beg, that the Lord would either moderate or satisfy them. Oh ! how I longed to be *with Christ, to see him as he is, and know him even as I am known* ! for, thought I, if crumbs, if drops be so pleasant, what must the bright views,

the full, the immediate enjoyment of him in heaven for ever be ? Thus it continued with me about four months. I thought, that, if I had been burning in hell the seven preceding years, my loss was now more than balanced by the gracious manifestations of God. And, regardless of all my outward straits, I rejoiced in the God of my salvation.

Next year, being the 28th of my age, began with a dark cloud : but I was supported under it by this promise, John xiv. 19. "Because I live ye shall live" also." Moreover, after I had for about two years and an half, enjoyed a most clear and powerful ministration of the gospel at Stirling, the urgency of my parents obliged me to return home. But finding no peace of mind to live where my soul could not be edified, (by a dry and legal preacher) I embraced an opportunity of going to service in another place ; but where the public ministrations did not edify me as at Stirling. At a sacramental occasion, my master and mistress gave me their allowance to stay and hear the evening sermon to be preached by Mr. Brisbane. But, having considered, that our house, which stood by itself, and the charge of it committed to me, might be hurt by thieves or the like, and so religion suffer on account of my absence from it, I resolved to go home and leave to the Lord to make up to me the want of that sermon. While I walked home two miles, my soul was quite ravished with the contemplation of Jesus Christ and my future enjoyment of him. Returning to the sermons on Monday, I found that the precise substance of my meditations had been preached from that text, Isa. lx. 15. "Thy God thy glory."

About this time, the case of the church of Scotland lay very heavy on my spirit ; and the rather, as wide steps were taken to pervert her in her doctrine, worship, discipline and government, and to fix a Popish Pretender on the throne of Britain.— Amidst many terrible assaults from Satan, I wrestled

led with the Lord for her deliverance, and obtained part of my wishes in the accession of the family of Hanover. But alas ! we quickly abused our mercy : and delivered up ourselves to work more abominations — About the beginning of the unnatural rebellion, I had the confusion of our country and the safety of my father's family pointed out to me by the word of God, beforehand. And, after I had been singularly transported with the manifestation of Jesus' love at our sacramental occasion, and sadly deserted at another, I beheld the fulfilment of it. Most of our family were obliged to flee from the fury of the Highland rebels ; but I staid with my mother, who was under sore bodily trouble. When the rebel officer demanded our quota of their imposed contributions, my mother told him, *That her conscience would not allow her to pay it, in any form,* he, restrained and overruled by God, replied, *That his conscience would not allow him to take it from her by force.* Not long after, I saw the house and barnyards of our neighbours, who had paid it, all set on fire by the rebels, while ours was preserved. — But the rebel proprietor of our farm, having afterwards got an indemnity from government, he turned my father out of it.

Being obliged to reside with my parents, I was reduced to great straits, as my soul could not profit by our minister. Some thought he was become less legal and indolent : but he was the same as before to me ; and so I was obliged, for the nourishment of my soul, to hear sermon in a neighbouring congregation. About this time, I had sensible smiles of the Lord's countenance mingled with dark clouds of desertion ; but I was taught to live more by faith on the promises. Having fallen into a fever, I, for seventeen days, enjoyed a continued manifestation of the new covenant, and of the eternal glories of heaven, without the smallest cloud of interruption. When I began to recover, O how averse I found

myself to continue amidst sin and vanity, and absent from my God. I would gladly have been burnt to death in order to be with Christ. This precious glimpse was followed by three months of dark desertion. But soon after my return to Stirling, the Lord vouchsafed me another visit, and enabled me to review the three preceding years of my life, remember his gracious visits, and perceive my own miscarriages. He humbled me before him, and enabled me to betake myself to his blood and Spirit, for the purging out of all my sinful blots.

After I had, for two or three months, enjoyed some inward peace and some pleasant tastes of his manifested loving kindness. I again fell under deep desertion, which was sometimes attended by a fearful raging of my inward corruptions. Even when this was restrained, I wanted the sensible influences of the Holy Ghost. Though I heard the mysteries of the gospel most clearly preached, I could scarcely get more than a merely rational apprehension of them. And though I did not doubt of my new-covenant state, yet I fretted, that God withheld from me the wonted smiles of his countenance.—At length, in his own time, he testified to my soul, that he had loved me with an everlasting love, and had drawn me with loving-kindness ;—that he was my Lord and my God ;—and he called me to open my mouth wide, that he might fill my soul with his fulness.

Being once more obliged to leave Stirling, in order to wait on my aged parents, who were now reduced to poverty, my health was soon broken with the toil, and with grief, that I was shut up in a place where my soul could not be edified by the public ordinances of God. I was tempted by Satan, that my niceness in hearing of sermons would reduce me to outward misery. But the Holy Ghost suggested to me by his word, *That I ought to seek first the king-*
dom

dom of God and its righteousness, and then all other things should be added to me, Mat. vi. 33. and that bread should be given me, and my water be sure, Isa. xxxiii. 16. also said to my soul, *Wilt thou not from this time cry unto me, My father, thou art the guide of my youth.* Reflecting upon my former experiences of the Lord granting my requests in trouble, and being enabled to apprehend him as my new covenant father, I familiarly pled with him, that he would provide some place for me, where I might take care of my aged parents. The very next day, I received an invitation from Stirling to come and teach children. God also sent his word, John xvi. 22. I "will see you again and your heart shall rejoice, and "your joy no man taketh from you," with such power as healed my body, though then very weak.

About this time, I was much confirmed in the faith and obedience of the gospel, and had my union to Christ and unfailing perseverance in grace manifested in the ministrations of it : but my spirit was much distressed with the tokens of the Lord's wrath against the generation ; particularly the divisions which took place among the godly. To add to my trouble, my father falling under sore affliction, was remarkably deserted by God. It exceedingly grieved me, that the carnal world were like to be much hardened, if one, who had suffered much for the truth, and been so long a professed follower of Christ, should die in this manner. I therefore earnestly cried unto the Lord for pity to him, and he granted my request. Two days before his death, my father's bands were all loosed, and he rehearsed what the Lord had done for him in his life, extolled his kindness,—and commended him and his way to all present. Some of his last words were, "Now "my hope is fixed within the vail ;" and often he said, "I shall see him as he is, and be made like unto him."

For

For about four years after the death of Mr. Brisbane, my beloved minister, my toil in teaching my school, the long distrels of my mother, together with my apprehensions of the sins and judgments of the generation, kept me in habitual distrels of body and soul; my constitution had been altogether unhinged, if the Lord had not held me up, and given me some glimpses of his countenance, and answers to my prayers.—After sixteen years of sore trouble, my mother died, triumphing in Christ. Some of her last words were, “That now all her clouds were scattered, and she had got victory, victory for evermore, over all her spiritual enemies.”—My niece, who had much assisted me amidst my difficulties, soon after died very pleasantly, saying, “She was going to her father’s house.” She had been exercised to godliness from the fifth year of her age, and had many delightful tales to tell concerning Jesus Christ and his gospel.

God having thus rendered my habitation desolate, enabled me to ponder his former mixtures of mercy and judgment towards me: and at sacramental and other occasions, he gave me some noted discoveries of himself in his word, that rendered it bitter to me to return to the field of battle with Satan and my indwelling lusts. The two next years of my life produced nothing remarkable in my case, but great trouble of body, which twice brought me to the very gates of death;—some heart-cheering smiles of the Lord’s countenance, and a deep concern for the awful state of the church, through the intrusion of the pastors, the screening of erroneous persons, and the pouring contempt upon all faithful remonstrances. Besides, by means of a fire which had happened in the house where my cloaths were, some had got my almost illegible records of God’s dealings with my soul, which I intended to have kept intirely to myself, and taken incorrect copies of them. My discovery of this so exceedingly distressed

sed me, for fear that religion might suffer on my account, that, for fifteen months, I could sleep little. But, at last, the Lord heard my request, and gave me the sleep of his beloved. But, for years after, viz till 1736, I continued my resolution to write no more.

She joined in the Secession, but her body became so frail, and her spirits were so depressed with the spiritual and other judgments inflicted on the nation, that she never finished any particular detail of the Lord's dealings with her during the last ten years of her life. She died in 1741, aged 56.

V. Life of serjeant JAMES NISBET, sometime in the Castle of Edinburgh.

NOTWITHSTANDING the persecuting troops that sought for my father John Nisbet of Hardhill, furiously, and on different occasions, pointed their swords or pistols to my mother's breast, threatening to kill her, when with child of me, in A. D. 1666, in order to force her to discover him, and dragged her through the rooms of our house, and our office-houses, with a burning candle in her hand, yet I was safely preserved in her womb, and born in due time, Psal. cxxxix. 13,—16. and lxxii. 5, 6, 7. When about three years of age, I fell into a nasty pond. My sister, who was two years older, saw it and cried. My mother came to my relief, and got hold of me as I came up, and drew me out. My head being turned downwards, much filthy water ran out of me: Yet I was never a whit the worse, Psalm lvii. 2.

When I was five years of age, I had some considerable concern about the eternal salvation of my soul

soul produced in me, by observing a godly man in his return from my grandmother's burial, lifting up his eyes towards heaven, and causing his lips to move ;—and so I became a volunteer in prayer.—Alas, my insensibility ! that, notwithstanding the pious example and careful instruction which I enjoyed, I was never affected with these things till now.—And, O the advantage of good company ! The sixth, seventh and eighth years of my life were filled up with convictions of my sinfulness, and melting dedications of myself to God, mingled with sad returns to such folly and wickedness as my age was capable of. But God still denied me success in sinning, and then a war between the flesh and spirit commenced in my soul.

In 1678, our house was plundered, and we had to ly two winter months in the fields, and yet none of us were worse ; and those who spoiled us were soon much poorer than ever. Next year, my father having been very active in the skirmish at Drumclog, his house was spoiled of about 120 bolls of malt, meal and corns. All his cattle and furniture were carried off, his papers seized by the treachery of some friends, and 3000 merks set as a price upon his head, and 100 merks upon my mother's and each of us children. But the Lord preserved us, and the Earl of Lowdon, and even some that had little appearance of religion, befriended us, while our neighbours, who informed against us, came quickly to outward misery.

For about two years, the Lord hid us from outward persecution : but, being from my father's house, I kept bad company, much disregarded the Sabbath, and sometimes equivocated in order to escape correction, or to conceal whose son I was. I rested in the religious duties which I performed, and the frames which I felt. I was little affected with the afflictions and murder of God's faithful saints. —

When

When I fell under convictions of sin, I refrained from, and bewailed my transgressions, and covenanted with God much in the manner directed by Mr. Guthry in his *Trial of a saving interest in Christ*, and Allan on *conversion*. When I broke my covenants, I renewed them again, and at last began to look on my breaches of them as an evidence that I was in a mere delusion.—I got a large view of my sinfulness and wickedness. I refrained from the company of the wicked, and even of untender disputing professors, and turned weary of formal covenanting with God. But though I frequented the company of truly tender saints, I could use little freedom with any of them on my spiritual concerns, except my mother. Both day and night I gave myself to prayer, that Jesus Christ might be my light, life, and every thing else that I needed; and studied to examine the true grounds of suffering for him, in which I was much entangled by the divisions, which took place among the truly godly.

In 1682, my younger brother having been sent to a friend's house in my stead, the persecuting soldiers beset the house, and the people fled. Notwithstanding their dreadful abuse of him, and threatening to kill him, he would by no means open his mouth to tell them any thing about the persecuted remnant. Oh, how unfit would I have been to be thus tried! One of the soldiers having dressed himself in women's cloaths, pretending to be our cousin come from Ireland to carry us thither, discovered where we were. His fellows immediately hastened to apprehend us. About half an hour before they came, my mother had sent me off to my father on the other side of the moss. While I was running, I found myself strongly impressed to cry for mercy to our family, though I knew nothing of their danger. I fell down and prayed thrice, and then went on running and praying with all my might; and was much surprised to find my mother and the other

children with my father, all in a great alarm. They had spied the enemy about fifteen minutes after I was gone, and had fled through the moss at a different place. But it grieved us to hear, that the gentleman, who allowed us the house, was imprisoned and tortured on our account, and got free by taking the *Test*.—About this time, I exercised myself with these questions, Am I not sinful, foolish, filthy, polluted by bad company, given to wandering of heart, deceived by false friends, hourly exposed to death?—Am I not a remarkable heir of God's wrath, indisposed to religious duties,—the chief of sinners, &c. ? Do not I need Jesus Christ as my Saviour for wisdom, righteousness, sanctification, and redemption, peace, pardon, direction, preservation and spiritual comfort.

In 1683, I was apprehended by some soldiers in an house, but marvellously delivered. I was soon after apprehended by three others, one of whom was extremely set upon killing me on the spot, but the other two opposed it. After they let me go, I continued some hours in the place, pondering these two providences; and what I ought to learn from them. Towards the end of this year, my mother and we children resided in a poor cottage. Being one Sabbath day with my father and his friends worshipping God,—when I parted from him, and all the way home, my heart was overwhelmed with sorrowful presages. When I came home, my younger brother was in a fever, and my sister at the point of death.—My mother blessed me, and, with great enlargement, prayed with us all; and then told me, that her days were near an end. As the Lord knew that I could not easily have parted with her, he cast me into an high fever, which made me almost entirely senseless. On the second day after, my mother sickened; and so not one of us could help another. But a gentlewoman coming to visit us in our affliction, provided us with a servant.—On the

7th day of her fever my mother died, and my sister soon followed. My father hearing of our affliction, came and found my mother buried, and my sister dead. He said, "Naked came I out of my mother's womb, and naked shall I return thither. The Lord gave, and the Lord hath taken away. Blessed be the name of the Lord. The Lord is now loosening my roots on earth, that I may fall the more easily." His grief for my mother was very great, as she was a woman of much sweetness, patience, piety, and resignation to the will of God.—In this afflictive providence, I observed the kindness of God to my mother and sister in taking them home to himself;—his righteousness in cutting off most of our distinguished enemies before any of us;—the uncertainty of human life;—the dependence of recovery upon the providence of God; that the black side of the cloud comes first to believers;—that God's kind omnipotence alone is to be rested on.—I observed also the vanity of the world; the need of activity in life, making sure an interest in Christ, living by faith, and glorifying God.

After great trouble and manifold straits, I, in A. D. 1684, got into an outwardly prosperous family; but I had little peace or comfort in it, as I had no opportunity of religious conversation, and few of going to religious meetings. A bad woman having fired the curate's house, the Lord's persecuted people were charged with it; and every body within four miles round was summoned to give what information they could concerning it on oath. But as I could not hold the judges as legal, nor safely expose my name, I went not. Some friends advised my father to go to Ireland; but he said, As he had sinned in Scotland, he would live and die witnessing for God's truths and against the sins of the generation in Scotland.—I resolved, through grace, to live habitually impressed with the immortality of my soul;—to be alway jealous of my heart, and dependent

dent on the invisible and all sufficient God,—and as my natural temper was easy, to keep close to the word of God, as the only rule of my faith and conduct ;—and to love and esteem every one that appeared to have the vitals of religion, though their views differed from mine.

In 1685, I was trysted with a variety of frowning and smiling providences. The abjuration oath was violently imposed ; and such as wanted passes from the managers of the nation, and sometimes such as had them, were murdered on the spot by the soldiers. As none in the family where I lodged, took that oath, all our names were given up in the list of rebels. Mr. Peden having preached at our house from John x. he, at the end, denounced the judgment of God against the person who had informed the persecutors that he was returned from Ireland, which we soon found a woman had done at that very time. Within five or six days, no less than three furious searches were made by some hundreds of soldiers for him and his friends. On the first day, we ran backward and forward about thirty miles, without any meat but a drink of milk at night.—One of their balls shot at us went by my left ear (and took away his hair knot). On the second day, being able to run no more, I lay down among the heath.—On the third day, being unable to flee, I fell down again, and besought the Lord, either to protect me, or qualify me for faithful suffering for his cause. Claverhouse's dragoons and highlanders passed within pistol shot of me without ever observing me. While I lay there, in great calmness of mind, my friends were pursued, and one of them taken.

Not long after, I had four fevers almost on end, in one of which I lay in a byre, which the soldiers searched while I was sick ; and I was obliged to be carried to another house : and under the last, I had
nothing

nothing to drink for twenty days; but the thin of four milk. After the first, I had the most unutterable impressions of the torments of hell and of the excellency of Jesus Christ on my spirit. After the third, I was much refreshed by the company of some very tender, and not censorious Christians; and by a sermon of Mr. Renwick from Mark xii. 34.

—It grieved me to find the divisions and disputes of the sufferers still increasing; and those who joined Argyle, and others who did not, looking so shy upon one another. These contentions did waste much precious time, and sadly eat out the liveliness of religion.

After two very narrow escapes from our persecutors, I happened to be with my father at a society-meeting on Sabbath, in a house around which, on every side, the country was open and plain. Observing the persecuting troops at the very next house, and having no way of escape, some were much perplexed. My father said, Since there is no way of escape, let us sing the ninety-first psalm.—We did so with little or no fear. The soldiers having searched the three neighbouring houses went off without coming near us. On the 7th of Nov. my father and three of his fellow-sufferers having gone to compose a difference raised in a society by a turbulent person, were apprehended by forty of the persecuting soldiers, the other three slain, and my father sore wounded. I had such sorrowful presages of his trouble, that I could not eat the bread which the ladies Mary and Jane, daughters of the Earl of Lowdon, brought me. Being asked why I was so sorrowful, I told them I knew not, but waited till the Lord should send me an interpreter.—They then, with bitter weeping, informed me of the news, and endeavoured, but in vain, to comfort me. I retired to the field, and William Woodburn, whose brother had been killed, advised me to submission, as my father and his brother, however

ever valuable, were not too good to suffer for Jesus Christ. This quieted me, and I cried to the Lord for grace to enable my father to be faithful to the death. He was executed Dec. 4th that same year. From his youth, he had been a close walker with God. He alway carried about a Bible with him, and was much given to secret prayer. He was zealous against the least compliance with sinful defections from our covenanted reformation, and had his mind marvellously reconciled to the cross of Christ. And, though a bold man, he was very tender of shedding the blood of his murderous enemies, even in self defence. Beside other strange forebodings of his death, he, a few days before he was apprehended, prayed with such enlargement as amazed all that were present, and his very face did shine.—Nine of his near relations also sealed the testimony of Christ with their blood.

The whole year was filled up to my soul, with lashes and smiles, frowns and kisses from Christ, by turns. In the remembrance of these, I charge thee, O my soul, to press after the knowledge of God, in the face of Jesus Christ,—to search into the intrinsic worth of religion,—to admire the wise disposal of God's providence,—to abound in self denial,—to mourn over the desolations of Zion, and the divisions among the godly;—to walk by God's word as my rule;—to employ Christ much;—to remember the shortness of my life, and the vanity of all worldly things;—and to praise God for his mercies.—The divisions of our sufferers still lay very heavy on my heart; and as I had opportunity I intreated them to cordial agreement, representing to them, that we ought, with especial earnestness, to search out our own sins; that the Lord had given so very different capacities to men, that they could not take up every thing in the same light; that the providences of God toward us, his wrath gone out against us, and even the wrath of our enemies, called

led us to the most fervent and united love among ourselves. I represented to them the advantages of harmony, and the hurt of dissension, Rom. xii; xiv; xv; xvi. 1 Cor. i; iii. Phil. ii; iii; iv. Eph. iv.

In 1686, I joined in a society with other six, some of whom were for offensive arms; and two of them, to my great grief, used them against our persecutors. I therefore left that place, and joined with some others. As I prayed one night on our way home from our meeting, we were suddenly surprized with a great light about us. I cried to the Lord to give us saving illumination, but no delusion: upon which it immediately disappeared. After this, I renewed my solemn covenant with God in a dependence on Christ. I read much on the Bible, and observed that God's people are often under sufferings, and are greatly supported and comforted by God in that condition. In reading the four gospels, I was led out to admire the manifold wonders of the work of redemption. By reading Mr Guthry's *Trial of a saving interest in Christ*, some of his sermons in writ, Mr. Gray's sermons, and the *speeches of dying martyrs*, I was much refreshed. I meditated much on the perfections, purposes and works of God, especially that of redemption. I resolved on prayer, reading and hearing of God's word; taking up of the cross; deliberating well before I acted; consulting the scripture in order to know my duty in every particular case; and to study, like Moses, Gideon, Boaz, and David, to follow the providence of God.

In 1687, I lived in a remote corner known to few. I observed that the world was far worse than I had thought it. I found the stirrings of corruption violent in my own soul. I therefore took a humbling view of the falls of saints recorded in scripture.—I saw the necessity of my consulting God in every thing; and if he hide himself,—that I ought to justify

tify him, bear his indignation, sigh and groan to him, and live by faith on his all-sufficiency; and I ought always to cleave close to Jesus Christ, and to esteem and admire him. In the latter end of this year, I heard Mr. Renwick preach with much life on the covenant of grace, from Song iii. 9, 10. He soon after suffered as our last martyr for the truth. Notwithstanding he was peculiarly hated and reproached by many, he was one of the most upright, meek, bold, prudent, lively and judicious Christians or ministers that I ever met with.—Nay, indeed, our faithful sufferers between A. D. 1661 and 1688. were zealous for the truths and cause of Christ,—upright according to their views,—bold and serious,—much given to mortification,—hospitable and compassionate even toward their enemies. They spent much of their time in fervent prayer, in which they had often great enlargement and familiar intimacy with God. They often ate but once in twenty-four hours, and sometimes not so often. They provoked one another to love and to good works. They freely communicated their spiritual experiences to each other; and if any of them fell under any spiritual damp, the rest wrestled with God in his behalf, till often his case was turned into the very best among them. They solemnly surrendered themselves to suffer for the truth whatever the Lord pleased. They had much familiar fellowship with him, and studied to be bold and faithful in his cause. They were much given to search into, and bewail their own sins, as well as those of the land, and to admire and exalt the Lord Jesus Christ: and when they came to suffer to the death, their souls were commonly overwhelmed with the sense of his love and comfort of his Spirit.

After Mr. Renwick's death, in February 1688 I was at a great loss for want of hearing the way of salvation preached without bitter reflections.

sinfully avoided almost all mention of our public defections; and others made them too much the matter of their discourses.—When there was a strict search made for arms, I greatly dreaded, that a Popish massacre was intended by our court, and earnestly cried to the Lord for his merciful interposal. When God, by the prince of Orange, delivered us from persecution and tyranny, I strongly hoped to see our covenanted reformation revived, as between 1638 and 1650; but was greatly disappointed. The steps of reformation in that period were overlooked. We had but one day of general fasting for all the sins of the former period of awful apostacy. There was no public covenanting with God, and no prosecution of the murderers of the Lord's people. Nay, many of them were employed as ruling elders in the church. The most of those, who bore rule in the state or army, were manifest enemies to the work of God. The reparation of damages suffered in the persecuting period was very partially managed: and such as had suffered most, were most slighted and overlooked. These and the like things made me, for a time, join with those that declined to hold communion with the established church. But their excessive inclination to disputing on public matters; and to censure every one that differed from them in the least punctilio, their excluding from their society all such as did, in any respect, submit to the civil government, or hear any minister, however zealous for a covenanted reformation, in the establishment, and their precipitant publishing of their *Declaration* against K. William's authority, made me withdraw from them, at the expence of incurring a load of calumnious reproach at their hand.

After living by myself for some time, and enjoying some measure of fellowship with God, my friends persuaded me to hear at a sacramental occasion in our neighbourhood. Hearing the three first ser-

mons under the power of much prejudice, I reaped no benefit by them. But at last, Mr. John Anderson of West Calder preached from Rev. xxiii. 14. to my great satisfaction and spiritual edification. This made me see that the unsuccessfulness of sermons is chargeable on the hearers as well as on the preachers, and encouraged me to join the established church. I did not profit under the means of grace as during our persecution; but what I heard, helped me to reflect with pleasure on my past experiences. Notwithstanding many sad decays, I fell under no considerable damp, till a little before the death of king William in 1702, but enjoyed gospel ordinances clearly dispensed, and attended with considerable power. I found much sweetness in weekly repeating the Shorter Catechism, and in meditating on the scripture. I particularly pondered in my mind, That agreeable friends must be used in submission to God's disposing will: that no creature can either afflict or comfort me, but as God orders; that success in sin is a dreadful plague; that it is a wrathful sign when God leaves men to consult with their own corrupt heart, or with flesh and blood; that discovery of wants is a great mercy, and ought to lead us out, not to quarreling with, but to humiliation before God:—how difficult it is to love Christ for himself; that my whole stock lies in Christ's hand, and so I may go to him for whatever I want; that the entertaining of a beloved lust greatly provokes the Lord to hide himself from me; that great remains of atheism, unbelief, and hypocrisy may consist with the truth of grace; that it is necessary to live by faith on Christ's continual intercession; that the experimental attainments of hypocrites are like land floods, which entirely dry up; but those of believers like a well spring; that believers are in Christ their ALL IN ALL more than conquerors, though in themselves they be scarcely saved; that the Lord causeth his people pass under his

his rod in their way to the bosom of his covenant; that I ought to be more and more persuaded of the vanity of creatures, as their comfort cannot reach beyond the grave, and to rely on God alone as my all-sufficient stay and foundation of hope through the blood of the Lamb. — O the secret place of the Most High is a goodly heritage! God is infinite, and can only satisfy my soul; and, being without cause himself, disposeth all things to his own glory. — Oh how amazing is the covenant of grace! how amazing the whole plan of redemption, and all the work of Christ in it, and especially his death, in which he bled rivers of redeeming love for men, — for me! — O my soul, come believe, — come see, — come wonder and drink.

The questions by which I studied to examine myself were: Do I alway study to aim at the glory of God, and to resist sin? Am I thoroughly convinced of my sinfulness and sweetly persuaded that Jesus Christ is my only and all-sufficient remedy? Am I striving in all the means of grace to embrace him as offered to me in the gospel? Am I willing to have him for my Lord as well as for my Saviour, and seeking to be an unparalleled debtor to the free grace of God in him? Do I improve Jesus Christ in all his offices, for instruction, pardon and acceptance? Do I study God's word, in order to be convinced of my sin, and directed in my duty? Do I endeavour to enjoy God's presence in all his ordinances? Am I, in my resolution, a martyr for his truths? Am I given to prayer for the destruction of unbelief, clearing of my doubts, preventing of my fears, and supply of my wants? Do I take heed lest I fall, when I think I stand? Do I labour to glorify a hiding as well as a smiling God? Do I take the beam out of mine own eye, before I reprove others? Do I hate the vices of the wicked while I love their persons? Do I habitually abhor myself on account of sin? Am I earnestly endeavouring to

have my legality of heart subdued, and my soul moulded in the covenant of grace? Am I preparing for death, judgment, and eternity? Do I study submission to my lot, and an universal obedience to God's law? Do I live as in God's sight? And am I deeply concerned for the case of his church?

After near thirty years of God's dealing with my soul, I fell into a most fearful depth of inward affliction. God hid himself from me; Satan roared against me; my indwelling lusts prevailed and ragged; my plagues of spiritual deadness, impenitence, &c. abounded; and all for a long time. Horrid and blasphemous thoughts haunted my soul; my animal spirits sunk; my body wasted; the impression of the torments of hell, especially of the punishment of loss, lay heavy on my conscience. I had now dreadful experimental proof of the absurdity of Atheism, Pelagianism, and Antinomianism. I cried bitterly to God for relief, and begged to experience gospel holiness, flowing from the faith of Christ's love to me. When I considered the case of Heman, &c. I thought my own far worse; and sometimes was forced to cry out, *Oh enraged, hardened, stupid, discontented, reprobate heart, baked with fire, and salted with the wrath of God!* I could neither bewail my condition, nor take pleasure in it. Had any heard the muttering of my lips, they would have thought me mad; and yet the agitation of my heart far exceeded.—I often protested and took God and his angels witness, *That my sinning was involuntary.* I slept little, and even then was terrified with dreams. I could scarcely either eat or drink. The wrath of God flashed in upon me from every air. While I was ready to sink under this hardening horror, that word Psalm xlv. 10. "Be still and know that I am God," was impressed on my mind. This encouraged me to pray for relief; and I saw that there was a possibility of salvation

for

for me in the power and grace of God,—though indeed I thought my salvation would be an unparalleled stretch of his sovereign mercy and love. And though I had no joy and peace in believing, yet I got my case examined and bemoaned.—In inexpressible agony of spirit, I cried out, Lord, if I must suffer for ever, remove far from me that crowning judgment of an eternal necessity of sinning—O let me not dishonour thee, and repine against thy will!—Ah!—shall I for ever sin against thee, so holy, so merciful and righteous a God!—Oh! cut me not off from the ocean of eternal love!—Oh! what wilt thou do for thy great name's sake!—Oh! magnify thy perfections in me!—I faint,—I sink,—I perish, unless thou speedily help me.—Behold how this accursed intruder, Satan, vomits his infernal poison into my heart!—Lord, rebuke him.—Oh! draw forth thy bowels of redeeming love towards me,—even poor me!

I considered, that I was fallen from the sight of my interest in Christ, and from my delight in God. I saw that I had procured this distress to myself by my carnal security amidst the outward smiles of providence,—by my spiritual sloth, pride, and unwatchfulness,—neglect of improving Christ;—by my turning out of the frame of my spirit,—neglecting to attend to my principles, motives and ends, in my actions—and by my wasting of precious time in conversing with the godly on trifling and disputable points.—I perceived, that under my trouble I had grievously sinned,—in neglecting the due consideration of God's sovereignty; in imagining that no such affliction could happen to the children of God;—in stumbling when his providence seemed to contradict his promise;—in unwatchfulness over my heart;—in overlooking my mercies, my original sin and sins of youth:—in the want of due earnestness in prayer;—in a legal attachment to, and dependence on my qualifications and works, and

not

not duly pondering the extent and spirituality of God's law ;—in not duly observing his providences ;—and in stumbling at the prosperity of the wicked.

I therefore poured out my heart to God, and earnestly pled the fulfilment of his promises suited to my case—I resolved to avoid all sullen pondering on my distresses ;—all disputing with Satan, except by scripture alone,—all fainting under my trouble :—and to endeavour occupying of myself in admiration of God's sovereign grace, and in faith in Christ's love and promises of sin-subduing grace and soul-cleansing influence—I endeavoured to meditate on the perfections of God as represented in scripture, and on the gracious plan of salvation manifested in the gospel,—on the revelations of Christ in the different periods of his church, and on the marvellous interposals of God's providence for his saints in their extremities, Gen. iii ; viii ; xii ; xxii ; xxxi ; xxxii ; xl ; xli. Exod. ii. &c. all along to Esth. x.—and to consider what Christ did for the woman of Samaria, the thief on the cross, Paul, &c.—What he endured for us, and with what cheerfulness and submission,—and how he sympathizeth with us ;—and I considered all these things as reasons against fainting under my trouble. —I found much sweetness in such exercises ; but flashes of God's wrath, fits of sinful plagues, and fiery darts of Satan returned upon me, and sometimes drove me from all exercise of duty, in which I could expect to meet with relief.

—At length the Lord, in a calm manner, made these words Heb. viii. 11, 12. “ All shall know me from the least to the greatest : for I will be merciful unto their unrighteousness, and their sins and their iniquities will I remember no more,” come with such life and power into my soul, as loosed all my bands, and filled me with joy, courage, and praise to him that had cast me into the dirt, that I might flee to himself for cleansing

During

During my above mentioned year of distress, and after some presages of it on my spirit, king William died, which was exceeding heavy to me, as I saw we had sinned away his life by despising him. But the Lord, by impressing on my heart the following scriptures, Psalm xc. 1. and xcvi. 1, 2. and xcix. 1. Ezek. xxi. 27. Isa. xxx. 18. taught me, that I ought to trust in no man; that God will never want instruments to carry on his work, part of it by one, and part of it by another; and that he can do it by himself, without any instrument, if he pleaseth.

Even after my above mentioned deliverance, the Lord kept me in his furnace, and delivered me in it. He thus taught me to adhere closely to Jesus Christ, to believe and discern, that afflictions draw me nearer to him; to improve every one as an excitement to fly under the covert of his blood, and to maintain honourable thoughts of God under them all.—My superiors found it necessary to put me into a post of excessive toil. I had much fellowship with God in it, but contracted a bodily indisposition, which all that my physicians could do but tended to increase.—I cried to the Lord for an out-gate, and had these scriptures whispered by him into my heart, Psalm xvi. 10. “Be still, and know that I am God.” Gen. xv. 1. “Fear not, I am thy shield and thy exceeding great reward.” and xxxii. 9, 12. “I will deal well with thee—I will surely do thee good.” Heb. xiii. 5. “I will never leave thee nor forsake thee.”—I was now deprived of the sensible manifestations of God’s love more than ever I had been before, excepting the year of my dreadful affliction. But I was enabled to live by faith on such words of God as Isa. xxvi. 4. “Trust in the Lord for ever; for in the Lord Jehovah is everlasting strength.” Psalm lv. 22. “Cast thy burden on the Lord, and he shall sustain thee.”

Mean-

Meanwhile, these scriptures, Psalm xxxi. 19, 20.
 “O how great is thy goodness, which thou hast
 “laid up for them that fear thee; which thou hast
 “wrought for them that trust in thee, before the
 “sons of men! Thou shalt hide them in the secret
 “of thy presence, from the pride of man: thou
 “shalt keep them secretly in a pavilion from the
 “strife of tongues.” and ix. 18. “The needy shall
 “not alway be forgotten: the expectation of the
 “poor shall not perish for ever.” and xii. 5. “For
 “the oppression of the poor, for the sighing of the
 “needy, now will I arise, saith the Lord. I will
 “set him in safety from him that puffeth at him:”
 were strongly borne home on my mind. I was then
 impressed with fears of coming reproach which was
 a burden I could not easily bear.—The storm soon
 broke. Some, who pretended to be my best friends,
 spread malicious falsehoods concerning me, in order
 to deprive me of my outward subsistence, and
 draw some of my superiors to their side. But the
 Lord helped me to live by faith:—he discovered to
 me that my pride was far greater than I had thought:
 he made me see much of the vanity of creatures,
 and that my eminently sweet enjoyments were to be
 mingled with strong bitters: he taught me that I
 must be denied to my reputation; and that innocence
 was no sure defence against calumny and envy.
 He refreshed my soul by Psal. xli. 1, 2. “God
 “is our refuge and our strength; a very present
 “help in trouble.—God is in the midst of her, she
 “shall not be moved. God shall help her, and
 “that right early.” and by Psalm xxxiii. 10. and
 xxxiv. 19. and lxxvi. 10. and cxxiv. 8. Job v. 17,
 —19.—He cut off some of my enemies by death,
 and convinced three of them of the sinfulness of
 their conduct. He stirred up Colonel Gardiner,
 Provost Drummond, and several other persons of
 rank to espouse my cause. He also refreshed my
 soul by visits from Messrs. Brown, Davidson, Ebenezer

nezer Erskine, Gabriel Wilson, and sundry other ministers.

After I had for several years conflicted with asthma, rheumatism, and palsy, I was seized by an additional trouble, of which my physicians thought it impossible for me to recover or live. Yet, about twenty five days, I was able to walk about. On the twenty sixth, my asthma, rheumatism and palsy returned on me with more violence than ever, which encouraged mine enemies against me. Amidst great perplexity, I cried to the Lord, and was comforted by his answer, That my sickness was not unto death, but to the glory of God, John ix. 1, 2, 3. I therefore considered how my affliction could tend to his glory: and what the Lord intended to teach me by his diversified providences, as, that he can smile or frown, and do to me what he pleaseth; and that though he afflict me, I ought to go no where else for relief,—and that I must alway be obedient and resigned to his will.

While I was studying to prepare for further trials, Satan was permitted to buffet me with a multitude of temptations; as (1.) That my day of grace was past. *ANSW.* Satan knoweth not the purpose of God, nor continuance of his grace, nor my future lot, therefore I hold him a liar, and betake myself to the all-sufficiency of God in Christ. (2.) That I had a reprobate heart. *ANSW.* I have the more need of God's grace to create a new heart in me; and I betake myself to Jesus Christ for relief from my wicked one. (3.) That I had no will nor strength to return to God. *ANSW.* True indeed; but Jesus Christ hath promised and is able to perform all things in me. (4.) That I fainted and fretted under my affliction more than ever any saint had done. *ANSW.* I lament my wickedness, and apply to the almighty Saviour for relief. (4.) That my heart was full of atheism and obduracy. *ANSW.* The worse it is, I will cry the more earnestly to Je-

Jesus Christ to give me a new heart, according to his promise. (6.) That all my comforts were delusive.

ANSW. I was once put beyond all doubt of their saving reality, and now, in darkness, I will wait for the Lord, Psal. ii. 12. and ix. 18. and cxi. 12. Isa. xxx. 18.

(7.) That I was an hypocrite, and reckoned such by men. ANSW. Satan's testimony and men's estimate are little worth; but I appeal to God, and wait till he clear up all my doubts. (8.)

That I was an unparalleled sinner. ANSW. Alas, too true! but I will the more earnestly cleave to the exalted, the unparalleled Saviour. (9.) That my afflictions were a proof of the Lord's hating me.

ANSW. No: for whom the Lord loveth he chasteneth, even as a father the son in whom he delighteth, Prov. iii. 12. Heb. xii. 6. Rev. iii. 19. And blessed is the man whom he chasteneth, and maketh to learn his law, Psal. xciv. 12. He afflicteth me for good ends. (10.) That I knew not my proper duty in my trouble, and dishonoured God in it.

ANSW. Too true; but I will apply to Jesus Christ for instruction, and for the pardon of these dishonours done to God. (11.) Providence contradicts the promises with respect to thee.

ANSW. Only in appearance, and therefore I will plead the promises with more faith and fervency. (12.) The promises are not fulfilled to thee.

ANSW. Let me be persuaded of them and embrace them, though I do not receive them. And if I do not receive them in their literal, let me cry and hope for their spiritual accomplishment. (13.) That I was never elected by God.

ANSW. The book of life was never in Satan's hand to inform him whose names are there. Revealed things belong to me; and I am sure that Christ is a Saviour suited and offered to me, and on this ground I flee to him. (14.) That I was much inclined to seek after happiness by the covenant of works.

ANSW. It is true; but I flee to Jesus Christ to give me repentance of this, and to strip me of

of all my self-righteousness, and make me dead to the law. (15.) That I often slighted commanded duties. **ANSW.** True; but I will confess my sins, and cry to Jesus Christ for help and direction in the time to come. (16.) That never a saint of God had been afflicted as I had been. **ANSW.** Jacob, Joseph, Moses, David, Heman, and especially Jesus Christ had been as afflicted as I, and the last much more, though God's only begotten Son. (17.) That as I had waited too long in the dark to no purpose, it would be best for me now to give it over. **ANSW.** I have often tasted of the Lord's goodness; and his love is unchangeable; and so I will wait for him. (18.) But my clouds were still growing darker, and my case more confused. **ANSW.** The darkness of God's people is often greatest just before their deliverance; and therefore I will wait God's time and pleasure. (19.) That I was in inextricable difficulties. **ANSW.** No. "It is all one to the Lord to save by many or by few; or such as have no power." 2 Chron. xiv. 11. "He waits that he may be gracious, and is exalted that he may shew mercy. He is a God of judgment: blessed are all they that wait for him," Isa. xxx. 18 and lxiv. 4. "Though the vision tarry, wait for it; for at the end it will speak, and will not tarry," Hab. ii. 3. (20.) That all my obedience to the law of God was slavish and mercenary; and that I knew not the right motives of duty. **ANSW.** I do know that I should perform duties in order to glorify God, testify my love to him, distinguish myself from the world, &c. and I will cry to Jesus Christ to enable me to the obedience of faith. (21.) That God did not regard and reward my obedience. **ANSW.** I obey God, not to procure benefits to myself, but to glorify him. (22.) That afflictions could never amend me. **ANSW.** But God can amend me by them. (23.) That I was in danger of perishing for want of daily bread. **ANSW.** God that feeds the ravens,

will never starve his own child ; and if he do, here I am, let him do what seemeth him good. (24.)

That my wants would make the way of the Lord evil spoken of. **ANSW.** If God keep me in the way of my duty, he is also engaged to maintain the honour of his own name. (25.)

That my friends would look down upon me in my poverty and want.

ANSW. If the Lord continue his favour, it is well: I shall quickly join the church triumphant, who will join with me, and smile on me. (26.)

That my name was already much wounded, and my spirit thereby stinged.

ANSW. I will bear the indignation of the Lord because I have sinned against him, until he plead my cause and execute judgment for me : he will bring me forth to the light, and I shall behold his righteousness.—Let me be swallowed up in delight and love to the matchless Saviour. (27.)

That I did not forgive my enemies. **ANSW.** I forgive them so as I would do them no hurt, but all the good that lies in my power. I pray for them, and delight to do so. (28.)

That I had often stumbled at the prosperity of the wicked, and the afflictions of the godly.

ANSW. I have indeed too often stumbled in this manner, through my not considering the reasons of such dispensations : but this was not because I hated the wicked. (29.)

That my having lain so long in trouble, manifested that there was no God to hear or deliver me.

ANSW. Oh, vile falshood ! his glorious works of creation and providence,—and especially his word, plainly manifest the contrary.

When I was under these buffetings of temptation, my wits were often racked, my reason weakened. I could not hearken to that which was said to me in conversation, and I longed for death.

At other times, the Lord pitied and supported me. I observed that as Satan improved a season of sinning, darkness, desertion, threatened poverty, and felt

reproach,

reproach, in order to tempt me ;—so he took opportunity to enthrall me, when I neglected to be watchful ;—when I pored on my miseries, and did not look to Jesus Christ ;—when I dallied with temptation, and made sense the rule of my duty ;—when I looked too much to the instruments of my trouble, and did not humble myself before God.

—Under my manifold afflictions, I learned, That it is my duty to make much use of Jesus Christ and his fulness, and to meditate on him ;—and to cry to God to conform my exercises to my lot. I told my case to very few, and complained to none. I searched the scripture for direction. I studied to learn a life of faith. I forbore conversing about temporal concerns, and studied spirituality about the inside of religion.—Nevertheless my troubles made me somewhat fretful in my temper, full of groundless jealousies, much incapable to resist sinful motions, and uncircumspect in my words and actions, but especially in my thoughts.

Directed by God, and contrary to the opinion of my principal physician, I, by letting blood, recovered my judgment, which had been exceedingly weakened by the palsy.—God made me to rejoice in my hot furnace.—During my afflictions, Satan often strongly suggested, that the scriptures, which had directed or comforted me, were such as I had no interest in, and were spoken by him to me. But God carried home these three, Isa. xl. 8. “The word of our God shall stand for ever.” Mat. v. 18. “Till heaven and earth pass away, one jot or tittle shall in no wise pass from the law till all be fulfilled.” and Luke xvi. 17. with such power and life as tended to confirm all the rest. I fixed on the following marks of impressions of scripture. (1.) If, at conversion, scriptures tend to awaken and convince, and then to reveal Jesus Christ, the impression is from God : but if it tend to encourage sloth and self, it is from Satan. (2.) If scriptures suggested in
prosperity

prosperity lead out to delight in God himself, and and to holiness, the impression is from God : but if it tend to encourage pride and resting on worldly enjoyments, or using them as motives to untender-ness of conversation, it is from Satan. (3.) When Satan suggests scriptures in adversity, the impression confounds, discourageth, and drives them away from God ; but when the Spirit of God suggests them they tend to humble and compose the soul, and to make them justify God, and draw near to him. (4.) When Satan suggests scriptures while one is praying for mercies to himself, the church, or his particular friends, the impression leads to depend on instruments, and to fret if the mercy be delayed, or doth not come in the expected channel: but when the Spirit of God suggests them, they tend encourage and enlarge the heart in prayer for them, —to look above means, and to a resignation with respect to the season and form of the mercy requested.

Since Satan is so active and cunning, I ought to fear and walk humbly with my God ;—and to study that all my requests be according to God's will and presented to him from right principles and motives, in a right manner, and to a right end.—I ought never to expect too much of temporal things, or too little of spiritual. I ought to be eminently active, and yet depend wholly on God's free grace and favour. I cannot get too much grace, nor rest too little on what I have received. I cannot expect too little from creatures, or too much from God.—When I am like to faint, I ought to look with one eye to former experiences, and with the other to Jesus Christ, as my all in all. I cannot obtain too much fellowship with God, nor prize it too tenderly, or carry too humbly under it.

God still continuing me in the furnace, I apprehended that he was answering my prayers with terrible things in righteousness, I therefore, upon the
most

most deliberate consideration, judged it to be my duty to examine thoroughly, Whether he had bestowed upon me the one thing needful : And if so, to consider much what I am and shall be in Christ ; to pray earnestly for more grace ;—to bless God for denying me success in sin ;—to remember that sad trials often succeed remarkable manifestations, and that Jesus Christ continually interceeds for the welfare of his people ;—and never rashly to conclude any thing terrible, till I see the end of it,—as terrible like things are often the best means of bringing forth good, and fulfilling promises ;—but to search out and bewail my sins, pray for much grace to carry under the dispensation,—and remember, that Christ, who went to the crown by enduring the cross, sympathizeth with me.—I ought also to consider, that these terrible things are means of exercising my graces till the deliverance come ; and that the scripture must be fulfilled in my meeting with fiery trials.

Nevertheless, amidst my eight years of sore affliction, I, in many remarkable instances, found the Lord to be a Hearer of prayer, as well as a revealer of his secrets to such as fear him. When in A. D. 1718 and 1719, we were threatened with an invasion of Swedes in Scotland, of French in England, and of Spaniards in Ireland, I, with great earnestness and freedom, wrestled with the Lord for our protection, and had these scriptures, Psalm xxxiii. 9. 10. 16. and xlv. 10. Isa. li. 3. Mic. vii. 18. impressed on my mind. Accordingly, all their designs were frustrated.—When the plague raged in France, 1720 and 1721, I cried to the Lord in favour of these lands, and was answered by Isa. xxx. 18. Acts x. 4. When I cried to him with respect to the dreadful confusions occasioned by the malt tax and other threatening appearances in 1725, I was answered by Isa. viii. 8. 9.—While my enemies were secretly plotting against me, and some of my friends

friends, the Lord warned me of it by a long fixed impression of Mic. vii. 4. and Prov. xxvi. 25. When I cried to him for protection and deliverance from them, I was answered by Psalm xci. 7. and cxxiv. 8. Job v. 19. Jer. i. 18. Isa. xxxiii. 1. Prov. xxvi. 27. Rom. xii. 19. When, in 1726, we were threatened with a combination of the Russians, Spaniards, and Emperor of Germany against us, I cried to the Lord to frustrate their designs, and after long silence was answered with Psal. xxxiii. 10. and lxxvi. 5. 12. and xlii. 5. and xlviii. 8. Job v. 12. powerfully impressed on my mind. In all these and other cases the events were perfectly answerable to the scriptures impressed.

When I prayed for my particular friends, I did not always receive my answers from the Lord in the same form. But (1.) When he seemed to refuse to hear in any thing for some persons, I did not allow myself to meddle with their state, or conclude that the Lord would not grant them the mercy, which I requested for them, but only that he would not honour me to be instrumental in doing them good by my prayers. (2.) Sometimes I have been long kept intirely in the dark, till I had observed the requested mercy partly granted, and partly not. (3.) Sometimes I have received general gracious answers, but been kept in the dark with respect to the particular favour which I requested. (4.) Sometimes he shewed me the duty of my friend for whom I prayed, but not the issue of that duty when performed. (5.) Sometimes he hath given me particular assurance of the events desired or feared.

From my experience in praying for others I have learned (1.) That clouds of guilt and hardness on a soul, are dreadful hindrances of prayer, and carelessness about praying for others, or being prayed for, is an awful sign. (2.) When I am forbidden to pray for any person, I ought carefully to examine by

by whom; and if it be the Spirit of God, to be exceedingly grieved, that such persons are like to be left in their sin, and to double my diligence in earnestly praying for myself and others. (3.) It is very humbling to be frowned on when praying for others, and pleasant to meet with enlargement in it. (4.) Though, in praying for others, I ought to be resigned to God's delay of his answer, yet I ought, as far as lawful, to insist for an answer at last. (5.) If I be not frowned into utter silence in attempting to pray for a person, I ought to insist on their need as an argument in their behalf. (6.) I must not give up with my hopes concerning a person, because I am not alway comforted in praying for him.—(7.) I ought to pray for all, and especially for the godly, and such as have done me good: and I have often fared the better when I prayed for others.

In prayer I have observed manifold misgivings of my heart. Sometimes I have prayed, and contented myself with mere words.—Sometimes I have prayed without pre consideration of my petitions, and this made them lame and dry.—Sometimes I have prayed without an awe of God, or guarding of my heart against wandering.—Sometimes when I have had suitable petitions and frames in prayer, something hath started in and robbed me of both my matter and frame.—Sometimes, after extraordinary enlargement, I have turned vainly confident.—Sometimes I have lost sight of my errand, and established my self-righteousness.—Sometimes I have approached to God as out of Christ.—Sometimes I have trifled with temptations, and have thereby been trampled under the feet of my lusts.—Sometimes I have stumbled at God's delaying of his answers.—Sometimes I have prayed with great despondency, and even under affliction, have restrained prayer.—Sometimes I have kneeled in order to pray, and not been able to utter one word, sigh or groan.

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I found it of great use for preventing the treachery of my heart in prayer, (1.) To consider, that God will not be mocked, and that he is omniscient and infinitely great and holy. (2.) To guard all my senses and avenues of my mind, and watch against all spiritual enemies and false confidences. (3.) To make sure of approaching to God in and through Christ by his own Spirit. (4.) To continue waiting on the Lord till he should appear, let my case be as dark as it would. (5.) To make my deadness and other spiritual plagues a motive to earnestness in prayer. (6.) To study calmness of mind under divine frowns and human injuries. (7.) To look much to the Lord for right and suitable ends, and for constancy in my proper work.

I have felt much of the Lord's goodness in prayer. He hath often made me delight in it, and in himself in it. My soul hath been often melted and transported in viewing Him as my portion. Often when I have begun in a formal manner, he hath sovereignly enlightened, warmed, and quickened my heart, and given me pleasant discoveries of his redeeming love before I had done. Often when I have been burdened with my sinfulness and misery, he hath given views of his glorious mystery of redemption through Christ. Often when I have prayed for renewed discoveries of the pardon of my sin, he hath intimated to my soul his infinitely kind purposes of love, and made me taste the sweet favour of it. Often when I have asked, he hath given me large supplies of his grace,—but I insist not on this, lest I be in straits in the fulness of my sufficiency. Often at my request, he hath shewed me my duty, and led me as blind in the ways which I knew not; and particularly as there hath been too much disputing about the circumstantialia of religion in my time, upon my asking counsel of him, he hath shewed me what was necessary for me to know, and hath hid other things that were too high for my capacity

capacity from me, and led me out to love the godly on different sides, and to think long before I opened my mouth in debates : and in this way I have had great peace.—Often, when I have asked, he hath preserved me in great dangers.—When I composed myself for prayer by examination, meditation and ejaculations, I seldom returned from it without great satisfaction.—Yet I have been much more frequently out of a right frame for the duties of religion than in it ; which hath often sent me to the throne of grace.—When I was helped to an earnest crying for the presence of God to myself and others in public ordinances, before I went to them, I often met with much edification to my soul in them.

By the manifold changes in my frame and lot, I found it proper to keep in view the following contraries their opposition, and act accordingly. (1.) God's wrath and his free grace. (2.) Condemnation and absolution. (3.) The shortness of human life, and length of eternity. (4.) Divine desertion and manifestations. (5.) Adversity and prosperity. (6.) Bad and good frames. (7.) Deadness in sin and growth in grace. (8.) Fainting and fighting in the spiritual warfare. (9.) My sinfulness and misery, and God's mercy. (10.) My discouragements and encouragements. (11.) My emptiness and Christ's fulness. (12.) Hell and heaven.—Lord, how long shall I be thus !—now resigned, anon rebellious !—now rejoicing, anon murmuring !—now no heart-felt plagues, anon nothing felt but heart-plagues !—now meek, anon all passion !—now humble, anon proud as a devil ! &c.

Though, in the latter part of my life, the Lord cast me down, yet after my dreadful year of desertion, his countenance for a time shined brightly on my soul : and in my multiplied troubles he hath since often applied his promises with remarkable power to my heart.—In my life, I have endeavoured, as the Lord helped me, to remember, That

I was born an heir of wrath, and made much more so by actual sin :—to avoid all profaneness and immorality on the one hand, and all establishment of self-righteousness on the other :—to be well informed of, and firmly interested in the righteousness of Christ, which is an antidote against all spiritual diseases and danger :—and to live by faith on it, reckoning myself less than nothing, and Christ my ALL and IN ALL.

VI. Life of ALEXANDER ARCHIBALD.

BEING born in a carnal family, and living amidst carnal companions, and under a careless minister, I spent the first twelve years of my life in brutish ignorance of God's truths and habitual neglect of his worship. I was particularly poisoned with their carnal conference on the Lord's day, and loved to have it so. As I was keeping my father's cattle, I, at last, began to think of praying, and learned some catechisms and forms of prayer for that purpose : but I quickly disrelished my set forms and began to conceive prayer for myself. My reading of religious books made my carnal companions undervalue and forsake me, as one that was turned serious ; and so I was delivered from their ensnaring influence.

Being one day directed to hear Mr. Lindsay of Bothkennar, I was much taken with his pleasant manner of preaching. Not long after, I began to go along with some savoury Christians of our parish who scrupled hearing our own minister, to hear him for ordinary on Sabbath. My head knowledge of the mysteries of the kingdom increased : and though I remained inwardly naught, I took such pleasure

pleasure in hearing him preach, and in hearing my new companions converse on the things of God, that I longed for the return of the Sabbath. After falling under a discontented restlessness of mind, without well knowing what I would have been at, I was by the law of God convinced of my sinfulness and misery. I found by experience, that all my knowledge in religion could not direct me to the proper means of relief for my distressed spirit. To make amends for my former sins, I abounded in prayer, and in attendance upon the public ordinances of the gospel. But all availed nothing to the quieting or comfort of my conscience. I therefore gave up myself as for ever lost, and thought every creature around happy in comparison of me. Having never heard any serious person complain of such inward distress, I concealed the agony of my soul. Meanwhile, my new sins tormented my conscience more and more. My convictions being still legal, made me belch forth enmity and rage against God. Duties of religion became burdensome to me, and yet I durst not omit them. Being ignorant of the gospel, I laboured to worship and glorify God in order to render him *my God*. Satan also violently tempted me, that such persons only as had proper good qualifications, had any warrant to trust in Christ. He also strongly suggested to me, that God intended to make me a distinguished monument of his wrath. One Lord's day, as I was going to church, he laboured to persuade me, that it would be done before I returned. After no small inward struggling, I went to church, and met with nothing uncommon. But I returned altogether overburdened with grief and fear relative to my spiritual condition. I retired to a secret place, and could do nothing but sigh and groan. I came all the way home sobbing forth these words, *What shall I do to be saved?* By the manner in which I dealt with the law of God, my enmity against him became more and more furious.

rious. The flames in my conscience waxed hotter and hotter.

Being afterward afflicted with a fever, the terrors of death and damnation seized upon me. I vowed, that if the Lord should spare me, I would live better than ever I had done. But I was scarcely restored to health, when I became more hardened and careless than before. From this Satan took occasion to tempt me, that God had given me, up altogether. Meanwhile he laboured to make me believe that there is no evil in sin. But by consideration of the reasonableness of the law of God, I was firmly persuaded of the contrary. Next, I fell under terrible apprehensions of God, and expected every moment to be set up by him as an everlasting monument of his wrath on account of my sin.— One night, that word, “He trieth the righteous,” Psalm xi. 5 being darted into my mind, led me to think, that God was but *trying* me, or opening my wounds in order to heal them. But, as I perceived plainly, that I was not *righteous*, my joy was quickly turned into mourning. Soon after, when Mr. Lindsay was preaching from Mat. xi. 28. “Come unto me all ye that labour and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest,” he shewed that the persons here invited to Christ were chiefly such as were wearying themselves in seeking rest in something beside him,—and represented his suitableness for such distressed persons. While I heard this, God shut me up to the faith, and enabled me, with great eagerness, to apply Jesus Christ and his salvation, as thus offered to my own soul, and so go on my way rejoicing. He afterwards preached from 1 John ii. 1. “If any man sin, we have an advocate with the Father.” O how these words, “If ANY man sin,” touched and melted my heart! for I could not but see myself therein included.

Not long after, Mr. Warden, in an action sermon from Isa. lv. 2. “Eat ye that which is good,
“and

"and let your soul delight itself in fatness," with great clearness and earnestness, held forth Jesus Christ and his fulness, and our warrant to take him as our own. Trickling tears and eager looks marked the inward frame of almost every hearer. My heart was altogether melted with the views of redeeming grace, and filled with joy unspeakable and full of glory. Now I thought wisdom's ways ways of pleasantness, and all her paths peace indeed; and that I should never be moved. But, on my return home, I fell under great perplexity. I had sinned in making my spiritual pleasure the end of my actions more than the will and glory of God; and in trusting to the stability of my frame rather than to the power of God; and in esteeming that which I got from him, rather than himself; and thinking that my good frames and multiplied duties would make him dwell in me, and delight to do me good, and not resting on the righteousness of Jesus Christ alone as the foundation of my fellowship with God; and in drawing my assurances of his love towards me, rather from his work within me, than from his word directed to me; and in making my experience the standard and measure of his love, rather than the infinite ocean of his own grace.

When my pleasant frame went off, I began to conceive hard thoughts of God, and hereupon was overwhelmed with darkness, fear, and dread, and thought myself in a worse condition than ever. Satan took the opportunity to tempt me to put an end to my own wretched life: but while my foot was ready to slip, God's mercy held me up. I concluded that all my former experiences had been but a mere delusion: and I would not essay to believe the gospel promises, as if I had never believed before. When my pitcher had fallen and lost the water, I bewailed the loss; but I would not return to the fountain for new comfort. Religious duties became

became a burden to me; and sometimes, when I observed the form of prayer, my tongue so clave to the roof of my mouth, that I could scarcely utter a few sentences.—I was strongly tempted, that I would turn out a scandalous reproach to the profession of religion. I was also tempted to look on the scriptures as nothing but a cunningly devised fable. But by a sermon of Mr. Lindlay proving their divine authority, particularly from their power in healing men's souls, I was established in the truth. When I was tempted think, that I had never been elected, the Lord shewed me from his word, that I ought never to enquire into his purpose concerning me, but in consequence of making sure my effectual calling, 2 Pet. i. 10. I was next tempted to disbelieve the being of a God; nor could all the rational arguments that I could think of, in the least check the atheism of my heart. My conscience condemned me for doubting of the existence of a God. But could not give me satisfying conviction of it. Hence my soul was inexpressibly polluted with sin, and racked with anguish and grief.

At length, about the twentieth year of my life, I fell under sore trouble of body, which continued three months.—Being a little recovered, I looked into a Bible that was within my reach, and cast mine eyes upon Psalm xl. 1,—3. “I waited patiently for the Lord, and he inclined unto me and heard my cry. He brought me also out of an horrible pit, and out of the miry clay, and set my feet upon a rock, and established my goings: and he hath put a new song in my mouth, even praise unto our God.” O how powerfully my soul was melted and captivated by these words! and I was enabled to sing them all, as in the Scotch metre, with the most close and pointed application to my own case. For about 48 hours, I continued in a kind of rapture; and, for a considerable time, I went on my

my Christian way rejoicing in, and praising my God. Some of the notes of my soulware, "Un-
"less the Lord had been my help, my soul had al-
"most dwelt in silence. When I said, My love
"slippeth, thy mercy held me up. In the multi-
"tude of my thoughts within me, thy comforts de-
"light my soul.—Thanks be to God who causeth
"us always to triumph in Christ.—The Lord appear-
"ed unto me of old, and said, I have loved thee
"with an everlasting love; and therefore with lov-
"ing kindness have I drawn thee. Gracious is the
"Lord, and righteous: yea, our God is merciful.
"The Lord preserveth the simple. I was brought
"low, and he helped me.—Whom having not seen
"ye love, and though now ye see him not, yet be-
"lieving, ye rejoice with joy unspeakable and full
"of glory." Psalm xciv. 17—19. 2 Cor. ii. 14.
Jer. xxxi. 3. Psalm cxvi. 5, 6. 1 Pet. i. 8. O how
pleasantly I was enabled to claim all the unbounded
stores of the grace of God, manifested and offered
in the gospel, as if they had never suited or been of-
fered to another besides myself.

After manifold struggles with the baseness of
my temper, I joined in a society for prayer and
spiritual conference. This tended greatly to the
increase of my knowledge of the principles and prac-
tice of religion. The tyrannical conduct and other
backslidings of the most of the ministers in the esta-
blished church obliged me to give up my communi-
on with them in public ordinances, and join the few
Seceding ministers, whom they had cast out; and
who, I thought, faithfully maintained these refor-
mation principles to which our fathers had solemn-
ly bound themselves and us their posterity by cove-
nants with God.—In 1734, I went to the sacrament
of the Lord's supper at Abernethy (as did many
thousands of the godly from most of the corners of
the land): but, to my great grief, the Lord denied
me his sensible presence, when and where, I thought

that I was owning his cause and truths more than ever I had done before. By examining myself, I found that he was rebuking me for my vainly imagining, that he alway grants more joy and success to persons, who, or when they are called to his distinguished services;—and that the duties of religion are unprofitable, when they are not attended with inward enlargement and comfort;—and for my esteeming the spiritual benefits which I had in possession more than all that I had secured in his infallible promises;—and for my mingling my own selfish advantage so much with his glory, as the chief end of my religious exercises, and my depending on my agreeable frames therein, as the ground of their acceptance with God.—In prayer on my way home, he enlarged my heart, shewed me the secrets of his covenant, and enabled me to pour out my requests into his bosom, and so I came home rejoicing in God my Saviour. Being now an ordinary hearer of Mr. Ebenezer Erskine at Stirling on the Lord's day, my soul was by the Holy Ghost much established in the faith once delivered to the saints:—and at sacramental and other religious occasions, my mournings were turned into joy and gladness.

But I soon forgot his mighty works, and waited not for his counsel, but relapsed into many legal and unbelieving fits. Nevertheless the Lord was still a present help in my trouble. I doubted that I had never believed aright, and so could have no saving relation to God. But he made me to see, that, as he was **ALL IN ALL**, I could by no means want him for my God,—and that I needed not want him for my God, since he had said, **I AM THE LORD THY GOD**,—and that, though, on account of my deadness and darkness, I could not produce proper evidence of my faith, yet he, without regard to any condition performed or to be performed by me, as the foundation of my relation to him, had solemnly and irrevocably declared, **I AM THE LORD THY GOD:**

GOD : and that it was not my faith, but his own self-giving declaration, that was the ground of my right and claim to him, I therefore resolved, that rather than want him to be my God, and that for ever,—I would appear before his awful tribunal, and produce, not my faith, but his declaration, **I AM THE LORD THY GOD**, which he could not deny,—as the proof that he was God ; even my God. He made me further to see, that he would not have put this his self-giving word into my hand, unless he had allowed me to take the benefit and comfort of it. Upon the footing of this divine, gracious and irrevocable grant, I therefore cried out, *That this God was my God for ever, and would be my guide even unto death.*

While at different times, I took a view of my own unworthiness, without looking to Jesus Christ, my faith and hope in the mercy and grace of God were much discouraged. But I was led to see, that however unworthy I was of any favour from God, yet Jesus Christ, his Son, was well worthy of all the salvation that I needed or could enjoy ; and that he was glorified in the Spirit's taking of his things and shewing them unto men, nay to me,—and was worthy to be so glorified. From these views, I concluded the certainty of my eternal salvation ; and that if I, through unbelief, should die in my sins, I would die practically blaspheming Christ as not worthy of my salvation, and not worthy to be glorified by the Spirit of God in communicating his benefits unto me.

I was also overwhelmed with apprehensions of my great guiltiness before God, and of the great power of my indwelling corruptions. But, being led out to view Jesus Christ as **THE GREAT GOD MY SAVIOUR**, O how my great sins and strong corruptions melted away before this **GREAT GOD MY SAVIOUR**. I saw it to be the most horrid blasphemy to suspect, that my great sins and powerful

corruptions could withstand the merit and power of this GREAT GOD MY SAVIOUR. I saw that the greatness of my guilt and the unparalleled strength of my inward corruption did but give Jesus Christ an opportunity of manifesting his GREAT merit and power in pardoning and subduing the same. And I saw, that God, having dealt with Christ according to the desert of my sins, strict justice itself required, that he should deal with me, according to what Christ had deserved by his obedience and suffering.

When I was plunged into fearful doubts concerning the certainty of my eternal salvation, the Holy Ghost led me to see, that my life was *hid with Christ in God*; and that therefore I could not be deprived of it, unless God could be overcome by my spiritual enemies. I saw that God had given me his word, his seal, his oath, as my securities for my eternal life, and that I could desire nothing further.— When I was perplexed with doubts, Whether I had by faith received Jesus Christ, I was made to ponder, that, without all doubt, God had freely and fully GIFTED him to me in the gospel. The views of this so drew out my soul towards him, that nothing less could content my heart than to be eternally in his presence, to praise and thank him for his UNSPEAKABLE GIFT. When I was oppressed with fears, lest my deceitful heart should cheat me out of my eternal salvation, the Lord enabled me to commit the keeping of my salvation, and of my heart too, to himself, and to flee to him to hide me, not only from Satan and the world, but also, and chiefly from my own wicked heart.

Being oppressed with fear, lest I should have satisfied myself with the mere externals of religion, I was, by the Holy Ghost, clearly instructed, that not these, but God himself enjoyed in Christ, could avail to the pardoning of my sins, the subduing of

my corruptions, and the healing of my nature. I therefore resolved, that since God himself was freely given to me in the promise, nothing less should content me, than himself as my ALL AND IN ALL. — When I was terrified, lest that which I took to be *faith* should be *presumption*, I was made to perceive plainly that it was indeed presumption to take any encouragement to believe God's gracious promises from any good thing, or be discouraged from it by any bad thing which I observed about myself: but that it was no presumption to trust in the sovereign love and mercy of God revealed to me in his word.

When I was overwhelmed with dread, lest I should be in a delusion, building all my confidence and comfort on the word of God, without feeling the operations of the Holy Ghost to work faith in me, — I was led to see, that there is a wide difference between the *warrant* of faith and the *working* of it; and to see that faith is founded on nothing but the *authority and faithfulness of God manifested by himself in his own word*; and that wherever there is a trusting to that, it must of necessity have been produced by the operation of the Holy Ghost.

Being distressed with respect to my spiritual condition, when I saw and felt all things wrong within me, I was much refreshed by that word, Rev. xxi. 5. "Behold I make all things new;" for I perceived clearly, that though my heart was so bad, that it could not be mended, yet the *making of all things new* well suited my condition. — When the multitude of my transgressions made me afraid to come boldly to God's throne of grace, to ask and receive saving favours from him, he enlightened my mind to see, that it was only such as through sins, however great or many, needed salvation; that Jesus Christ came to save, 1 Tim. i. 15. Matth. ix. 13. and xviii. 11. Luke xxi. 10; and that God, to encourage me to boldness in dealing with him, had expressly invited

vited me to *come and reason together with him*; and had assured me that the issue should be safe and happy for me; that *though my sins were as scarlet, they should be made as snow; and though they were red like crimson, they should be as wool*, Isa. i. 18;—and that he had even directed me to take with me words, and say, “Take away all iniquity, and receive me graciously,” Hos. xiv. 2. He also further encouraged me, by shewing me the wonderful store, out of which I might and should be supplied, *even all the fulness of God*, Eph. iii. 19. and his wonderful measure of communicating that fulness for the supply of all my wants,—*according to his riches in glory by Christ Jesus*, Phil iv. 19.

Mr. A. Thomson having, in his sermon at the communion of Craigmillar, made a most earnest, full, and free offer of Jesus Christ and his compleat redemption to the whole assembly, as in themselves sinful, guilty, and self-destroyed men, the sovereign grace and kindness of God so powerfully overcame my heart, that I found it as impossible not to believe in Christ, as ever I had done to exercise faith. Wherever I turned my thoughts, this sovereign grace and love met me, as it were, *face to face*, and made me yield up myself as its prisoner, fully and cheerfully content to be its everlasting monument and unparalleled debtor. After this I, for a time, went on my way rejoicing.

In the whole time of my concern about the salvation of my soul, I have ordinarily either enjoyed great comfort, or been plunged into deep inward distress,—often on the very brink of despair. But by views of Jesus Christ’s infinite merit, infinite power, and faithful word, and by views of the connexion of his glory with my salvation, I was preserved from absolute despondency: for I saw that I could not despair without supposing that Jesus’ blood was not a sufficient price to purchase my eternal redemption, and that his almighty power, love,

love, and grace were not capable to save me. I saw that I could not despair without supposing, that in his word and his oath, he had uttered abominable falshood to deceive me;—and that he was willing, infinitely to dishonour himself, in order to damn me;—or that he would gain as much honour to himself in my eternal damnation, as in all the obedience and death of his Son.

In my strangely diversified cases, the following scriptures were exceedingly refreshful to my soul. From Zech. xiii. 7. “Awake, O sword, against “the man that is my fellow.”—I, with ravishing wonder, saw my nature so united to Godhead, as if it were taken in to be a FELLOW to the infinite ALL IN ALL, that rebellious sinners of mankind might be united to their infinitely offended King, and condemned malefactors united to their infinitely righteous judge; and that God could now withhold nothing that was necessary for my good, when he had already done so much.—Oh, how delightfully all the hard thoughts of God and jealousies of his love gave up the ghost before the views of MY GOD IN MY NATURE.—From Acts xx. 28. “The “church of God which he hath purchased with “his own blood,—I, with wonder, beheld how he became a man that he might have blood to shed for men; that his Father took pleasure to squeeze it out: and that the fountain of the blood of God is in the gospel set open for the washing of guilty and polluted sinners. And, Oh, for what sin cannot the BLOOD OF GOD atone? What sin cannot it purge away?

From Exod. xx. 2. “I am the Lord thy God.”—I plainly saw, that I had not a God to purchase to be mine, but had one *already given* in the gospel to be claimed by me as my own; and that since God had, in his gospel declaration, freely GIVEN himself to be my God, I could give no reason why he should not be my God; and that I could not doubt with-
our

out making him a liar to his face ; and that either it behoved me flatly to deny the existence of God, or to take him to be my own God ; and that there being no other way of dutiful dealing with God, but as my own God, I might as well cast away religion altogether as refuse to take and claim him as *my own God*.—From Exod. xx. 3. “Thou shalt have no other gods before me,” as connected with the preceding, I observed, that God had bound me to believe his promise and grant of himself to be my God, as to obey his command, forbidding atheism or idolatry ; and without arguing myself from under the moral law of God, as if I were a brute or stone, it necessarily behoved me to begin my obedience to him, in believing that *he is my God, given to me by himself in his gospel*, without any regard to any obedience or qualification in me as the condition of my right and claim, and that to think of obeying his commandments, and then knowing and acknowledging him to be *my God*, amounted to an overturning the whole law of God, as well as the gospel ; and that if the grants, or giving promises of the gospel be rightly believed, the precepts of the law will of necessity be rightly obeyed, because in *believing God to be my God upon his own grant of himself to me*, the leading act of obedience is performed, and the *foundation* of all other obedience is firmly laid.—From Zech. xiii. 9, “I will say, It is my people ; and they shall say, The Lord is my God,”—I observed, that God had not only, with infinite earnestness, given himself to me, but had also undertaken for my believing, that he is mine by virtue of his own gospel-grant of himself ; and that if I should say, that he is not my God ; or that it is not my duty to believe in him as my God ; or that I could not believe him to be my God, I behoved to call him a liar. What could I then do, but fly into the arms of his love and grace, saying,
from

from the centre of my heart, *This God is my God forever and ever* : for I saw that my believing was nothing but the echo of my soul to his promises and declared new covenant grants of himself and all his fulness to sinful men.

From Heb. x. 19, 30. "Having therefore boldness to enter into the holiest of all by the blood of Jesus, &c."—I was powerfully instructed, that I might come boldly into God's presence as a man enters into his own house, or into a public inn, where he can pay for every thing he needs ; and that being clothed with the righteousness of his Son, I may appear before him with greater glory and boldness, than if I had never been cast off ; nay, than all the angels in heaven.—I was also rebuked for my attributing part of the praise of that familiarity which I had with God, to my own care ; and for my legal fears that my sin would deprive me of access to God, and my legal hopes, that my duties and frames would procure me ready admission into his presence.

From Heb. x. 35. "Cast not away your confidence which hath great recompence of reward,"—I was made to see, that Jesus Christ and his righteousness were so brought to my hand, that I could not come short of a saving interest in him without casting him away as an abominable thing. And I found I could not think of casting away from me the brightness of the Father's glory, him that had come in the name of the Lord to save me ;—or of casting away his righteousness, which was the price of all that grace and glory which I could wish to enjoy in time or in eternity.

From Isa xxv. 6. "In this mountain shall the Lord of hosts make unto all people a feast of fat things, a feast of wines on the lees ; of fat things full of marrow, of wines on the lees well refined,"—I observed, that all the fulness of grace and glory contained in the new covenant was prepared at

Christ's expence, without any legal condition required of us; and that I could not propose any of my works or qualifications as the price of the blessings of the entertainment, or ground of my claim to them, without supposing, that God was so unjust as to demand, or at least accept a double price for the same benefit. And I saw, that I could not neglect the study of gospel-holiness, without defrauding myself of a principal part of the gospel feast, Christ Jesus, as made of God to me wisdom, sanctification, and redemption.

From Psalm cx. 3. "Thy people shall be willing in the day of thy power,"—I perceived, that the infinite power of God was my security for my eternal salvation, in opposition to all my guilt, corruptions and spiritual enemies; that it was therefore all one, whether the impediments in the way of my salvation were few or many, small or great, weak or strong. I saw my great folly and wickedness in ever fainting before these enemies, as if the infinite power of God had or could be overcome by them.

From Isa. xli. 12, 13. "Hearken unto me, ye stout-hearted and far from righteousness: behold I bring near my righteousness, &c." compared with chap. xli. 1, 21, 26, and xliii. 26. I was made to see, that the righteousness of God was brought near to me by name; and that I was called by him to bring forth that which he had brought to me as the ground of my justification before him.—I saw the gospel bringing it near to me, and the law charging me to produce it, as the strong, the all-sufficient ground of my justification before God.

From Luke ii. 14. "Glory to God in the highest, peace on earth, and goodwill towards men," I, with great satisfaction to my soul, beheld that God was glorified to the highest in the eternal salvation of sinful men; that his regard to his own highest glory infallibly secured my salvation; and that, as my unbelief not only attempted to rob me of

of my salvation, but also to rob himself of his highest glory, therefore he had a principal detestation of, and quarrel with it.

Acts xiii. 26. "To you is the word of this salvation sent," I looked on as the direction and indorsement of all the above-mentioned and other-like promises of the scripture and declarations of the grace of God to me in particular; and that therefore I ought to believe, accept of, and trust in them all, as particularly and firmly as if they had never been declared to any other but myself.

VI. Life of ELIZABETH WAST.

I CANNOT tell the precise time when the Lord began to deal with my soul, but it was when I was very young. My mother and aunt being at great pains to instruct me, I apprehended heaven to be a place where I would get every thing comely and delightful, and therefore resolved to abstain from swearing, lying, and other like abominations, in order that I might obtain it. But the first temptation that I met with made me break through all my resolutions. When the fears of lying for ever in hell disturbed my conscience, I lulled it asleep by saying my prayers, which I had learned by rote, and studying to be less wicked than others around me. Under the ministry of Messrs. W. Erskine and J. Kirkton in Edinburgh, I had my affections often remarkably moved, so that I durst not neglect secret prayer, and sometimes their inward glowing made me weep in my devotions. This made me think myself really converted. My repeating of sermons which I never applied to my own conscience, made others gratify my pride with their applause.

Mr. G. Meldrum having now become our minister, as he, in a sermon from Joshua xxiv. 15, "Choose you this day whom ye will serve," earnestly called us to make a present choice of the Lord Jesus Christ for our Saviour and Lord, my soul was powerfully melted and drawn by the word, and made willing to accept of and serve him all the days of my life.—But while he afterward insisted, that none of our prayers or duties could be accepted, unless they were first put into Christ's hand, and unless we had a saving uptaking of Jesus Christ in his person and offices. This filled me with fear and dread, that nothing that ever I had done could be accepted before God. But, while he at considerable length discoursed concerning the nature, offices and exhibition of Christ in the gospel, from Gal. iv. 4, 5. Mat. i. 21. Acts iii. 22. Heb. vii. 26. Psalm ii. 6. John iii. 14, 15. my soul was filled with admiration of him, and drawn out to embrace him as my only Saviour and Lord, and made content to deny myself, and take up my cross and follow him. In consequence of this, before, and immediately after, I first partook of the Lord's supper in 1694, I devoted myself to him by a solemn covenant.

For some months after this, I enjoyed such delightful views of Jesus Christ, in his loveliness and love, and his being in every respect suited to answer all my needs and plagues, ignorance, guilt, rebellion, and the like, and to be to me every thing necessary, and profitable, and comfortable, as filled my heart with wonder and joy, and my lips with praise. But about the end of the year, I fell under strong temptations to doubt of the *being of a God*, which threw me into dreadful consternation. It filled me with anguish to think, that now I had no certain persuasion of the existence of him, whom I lately looked on as the God of my salvation. But,
while

while I was on my knees musing like one distracted, —drowned in the depths of unbelief, the Lord pitied me, and brought the observation to my mind, the forgetting of which had occasioned the temptation. He convinced me of my sin in entertaining such a temptation, surprized me with his comfortable presence, confirmed my interest, and enabled me to plead his promise, that he was my God, my Redeemer, and my King.

Notwithstanding my remarkable sweet deliverance, I soon found dreadful remains of atheism lurking in my heart, and ready to break forth whenever I met with a new temptation.—Being sensibly deserted by the Lord, I fell under great deadness of spirit. I could not tell my case to any, it was so extraordinary. I could not find any of my Christian companions ever to have been in such a case. On January 1, 1695, I being with them, they conversed concerning the love of Jesus Christ. This kindled in my breast a desire to know him. But I thought that I was nothing but an hypocrite, and that since I had not walked in the Lord's way, none of his promises would be fulfilled on me, Num. xiv. 34. By a sermon from Col. i. 21. "And you, who were enemies in your minds by wicked works, yet now hath he reconciled,"—I had my bands loosed, and that night had comfortable fellowship with God. But Satan quickly tempted me to think that all was delusion. My ignorance of Jesus Christ under such a clear gospel ministry exceedingly confounded and pained me. In anguish I mourned that I was undone; that I have been born to be a monument of his displeasure.—God hath forsaken me!—O that I had never been born! I debated with myself, that I was a stranger to Christ.—I saw myself undone, and yet was little affected with my condition. Nevertheless, it was refreshful to me, that on the Lord's day Mr. Meldrum in his sermons so exactly hit the case of my soul, though I had
told

told it to none. That word 1 Cor. i. 30. "Christ
" is of God made unto us wisdom, righteousness,
" sanctification and redemption," especially the word
redemption was made sweet to my soul.

Meanwhile Satan injected most blasphemous and
atheistical thoughts into my mind. I apprehended
that there was no such sinner as I in the world. I
thought never one of God's people had been tempt-
ed as I was. I found myself alway ready to yield
to his temptations, I thought that there was no hope
for me : that it was in vain for me to read or pray,
as God would not have mercy on such a hypocrite.
When I attempted to pray, it was strongly injected
into my mind, That there was no God, no Christ,
no Holy Ghost ; that the Bible was but an impos-
ture contrived by men ; that ministers were but vil-
lanous seducers of their people ; that all my religi-
ous duties were but lost labour ; that the heathens
were wiser than I in worshipping a God which they
knew.—I durst tell my distress to none. I thought
every body, even the most profligate swearer, hap-
pier than I, as they believed *that there is a God*.
The reading of *Francis Spira* did much hurt to my
soul, and was like to have led me to murder myself.
But Bunyan's *Grace abounding to the chief of sinners*,
especially his account of the Lord's way with him,
under his atheistical distress, was very useful. But
I would not believe unless a sensible miracle were
wrought.

When I continued in this dreadful wickedness
and trouble, Jesus Christ, by his Spirit, shewed me
that I had notwithstanding as free access to his
throne of grace as ever. The very thoughts of this
transported me ; and, as soon as I could, I retired
to secret prayer. The Lord kindly shewed me the
absurdity and wickedness of my yielding to the
temptation, and promised that *he would never leave*
me nor forsake me, Heb. xiii. 5. though I had so
much forsaken him. He gave me a new discovery
of

of his own nature and perfections, and gave me such a firm persuasion of his truth, as I could have sealed it with my blood. With great freedom I poured out my heart before him. I was filled with joy and rejoicing. Our minister's sermon from Rev. iii. 20 and that word Ezek. xvi. 6, 8. "And when I passed by thee, and saw thee polluted in thy blood, then thy time was a time of love; and I said unto thee LIVE.—And I entered into covenant with thee, and thou becamest mine," filled me with wonder and astonishment. And I, in the most solemn manner, took all things around me to witness, that I heartily embraced Jesus Christ, in his person, natures, and offices, to be mine. The nine appropriating MYES in Psalm xviii. 1, 2, 3, were also exceedingly sweet to my soul. O the pleasant life that I for some days enjoyed, wondering at, and thanking my God for, his love to me thro' Christ Jesus.

But alas! I had scarcely sung that *my mountain stood strong*, when Satan and my inward corruptions gradually carried me off my feet, and made me slacken my pace in duty. In consequence of this I fell asleep, and contracted such a spiritual deadness, that I could do nothing at all. I was sadly overcome by sleep when I was at secret prayer, which made me look on myself as an hypocrite. My corruptions dreadfully raged and prevailed. I lost my joy and comfort; and soon forgot the Lord's late mighty work on my behalf.—For a time I laboured to oppose my corruptions and temptations: but my beloved lust, dressed up in a religious like appearance, gradually enticed, entangled, and polluted my heart.

I no sooner purposed to attend a communion at *Laswade*, than Satan laboured to persuade me, that such an unfaithful covenant-breaking wretch could not, without great presumption, go thither, or be accepted at the Lord's table. When I went off, my unbelief and atheism, my want of love to Jesus Christ

Christ, my pride, both natural and spiritual, my hypocrisy, my backsliding, and my predominant sin were all presented to my conscience in order to discourage me. When I insisted, that no cure could be had for these sins, but in Christ. Satan urged, that I had not on the *wedding-garment*. I replied, that I would go to Jesus Christ in my filthy rags, that he might clothe me with change of raiment. I resolved, like Esther, to cast myself at the feet of his mercy; and if I should perish, I would but get what I deserved. Notwithstanding many difficulties, both spiritual and temporal, I came to the place on Saturday. The sermons, that day, were mostly discouraging to me, except a note in the end of the second. After several alterations of my inward frame, sometimes to the better, and sometimes to the worse, I came home, with some hope but little comfort. I soon perceived from Acts xvii. 23. 1 Cor. xv. 34. that I had procured my distress to myself by my ignorance of God.—My darkness so increased, that neither promises nor threatenings affected me. This made me conclude, That Christ had no special love to me.—Notwithstanding my dreadful despair and its wicked attendants, I, almost every Sabbath, either in public or secret, got some cordial to support me, and keep me from utter fainting. But even on these very days, the prevalency of my peculiar corruptions made me often roar to the Lord Jesus, that he would exercise his kingly power in subduing them.

In October 1695, I, at another sacramental occasion, was helped to give myself anew to the Lord. But the apprehensions which I had of sins dwelling in me, and mingling themselves with all my duties, made my life a burden to me, and produced in me strong desires of death. Being blamed by my fellow Christians, and rebuked by the Spirit of God for deserting the minister of our own parish, in order

der to hear Mr. Meldrum. I attended our own pastor and finding him discoursing on the covenant of grace I was exceedingly comforted, and never after left my parish kirk.—The way of the Lord was then very sweet and pleasant to me : and in telling my Christian intimates what the Lord was doing for my soul. But the state of my father's family lay very heavy on me, as we had not the daily worship of God in it ; and my father appeared not to have any concern about spiritual and eternal things. The afflictions which they endured, and my dealing with my father, wrought no reformation among them. I therefore could do no more, than earnestly pray for his conversion, in which I met with great enlargement.

After I had got another inexpressible refreshment by Mr. John Moncrief, our minister's discourses on the *conversion of Zaccheus*, Luke xix. I fell under the fearful prevalency of my inward lusts. I lost sight of my interest in Christ, and looked on myself as nothing but a painted hypocrite without, and a nest of devils within.—I concluded, that the fate of the *house built upon the sand*, in the parable, would be my own. My fearful loads of corruption made me often beseech the Lord either to take me out of this world, or keep me from the evil.—I earnestly longed, that Jesus Christ, as my King made over to me in the gospel, would subdue my unmortified corruptions. In this manner I toiled on, till, at a sacramental occasion 1696, where by means of Mr. W. Moncrief's sermon on Saturday from John xi. 40. and by J. Moncrief's action sermon from Ezek. xvi. 6, 8. my soul was remarkably enlightened and melted, and made solemnly and heartily to accept of Jesus Christ in all his offices and relations, even his cross ; and I had my interest in him delightfully confirmed at his table. These words, " I have loved thee with an everlasting love," Jer. xxxi. 3. " I will betroth thee unto me for ever," Hos. ii. 19.

were darted into my soul with great power and life. I was led to an earnest wrestling with God in behalf of the church, and in behalf of my relations, and for myself, that the Lord would make me sincere in every duty,—stedfast in my vows and resolutions; a cordial sympathizer with his people; an useful branch in his vineyard, bringing forth much fruit to his glory;—and very humble under all the mercies which I received. Let carnalists say what they will, I, though naturally of a merry disposition, never knew what it was to be really joyful, till I received Jesus Christ.

A terrible fire, that happened in the Canongate, and put the whole city into confusion,—led me to observe the following hints relative to worldly things. That though they may assist such as have them with more time and opportunity to serve God;—enable them to relieve the poor members of Christ;—procure them many friends in their trouble;—and afford them great matter of praise and thankfulness to God, yet men must suffer a great deal of trouble before they can get them; they are apt to decoy our love from Christ; many lose their souls in seeking them; they afford no real comfort on a death bed, or when our conscience is awakened; they can be no ransom for our sins, or avail us before God's tribunal; they hinder many from receiving of Christ; they are no tokens of God's love; they render many like devils in pride; the loss of them may soon fill us with anguish and vexation; they are seldom gained with a good conscience; we must quickly die from them, and leave them to such as will scarcely thank us for them, or that will improve them to their own ruin, both in time and in eternity; and to account for them at the judgment seat of Christ with joy and not with grief, will be very difficult.

Self-conceit and self-seeking began to prevail in a manner which I had not formerly experienced. I found it hard work indeed to be denied to my duties,

ties, my prayers, and tears. But I found, That if any man will be Christ's disciple, he must deny himself. —I saw that I had fearfully robbed God of the glory due to him, and that I carried about my selfishness whithersoever I went, or whatever I did. Upon examination of myself, I found, that I was extremely like the hypocrites described in scripture, Isa. lviii. 2. Mark x. 20, &c. Our minister's discourses from Mark x. 21. "Take up thy cross and follow me," were very trying to my conscience. But, by some notes in them, I was led out to embrace Jesus Christ as offered to me in the gospel. I resolved, That no cross should ever separate me from him. I consented to every cross I could think of, except the absence of God in times of trouble, and the being given up by him to a selfish disposition of heart.

Being convinced of the treachery of my heart, I fell under great fears, that all my resolutions would be broken; and therefore often besought the Lord to keep them for me. —I also found my indwelling corruptions, and especially my predominant lust, raging within me. After performance of religious duties, they used to harass me, in a peculiar manner, which made me see that nothing could cure me but the power of Christ. —It was some comfort to me, that having, contrary to custom, revealed my case to a Christian companion, I found that my condition was not singular. I set apart a day for fasting and supplication relative to my predominant idol, and earnestly cried for conformity to the Lord Jesus Christ, and to have as much sanctification as could be attained in this life. I got my heart poured out before the Lord, and his powerful impression of Phil. ii. 13. "God worketh in you to will and to do of his good pleasure," made me believe, that my requests were accepted, and would be granted.

Having, on the Thursday before the communion, gone to Laswade, with much pleasant contemplation by the way, I found that the fast had been observed on the day before. This threw me into a terrible agony of mind, and made me return weeping and mourning that I had lost such an opportunity by my negligence of enquiring. I tried to find out the cause of the Lord's controversy with me in this point,—and to cry to him, that he would search me, and try me, and shew me all the secret abominations that lurked in my heart. Notwithstanding my earnest longings for his presence, I was much deserted on the Saturday and Sabbath; but met with some pleasant enlargement on the Monday. I saw by this, that neither ordinances nor frames ought to be idolized, as if the Lord were restricted to the one, or his favour gained by the other.—That word, Isa. xliii. 22,—25. was powerfully applied to my heart: and I was so helped, that almost every thing I cast my eyes on, led me out to some spiritual meditation. John xiv. 27. "Peace I leave with you. My peace I give unto you, not as the world giveth, &c." was also very sweet to my soul.

But the plagues of my heart soon so fearfully beset me, that I went near calling all my former experiences delusion. After manifold tossings, as I was one night extraordinarily concerned in prayer about an unparalleled measure of sinful corruption which dwelt in me, I enjoyed the most delightful fellowship with God through Christ, and was made to see, that Jesus was exceedingly grieved, that notwithstanding all that he had done to and for his people, they should be so ready to doubt of his love for every trifle; and that notwithstanding all his love tokens bestowed on them, they should be so ready to entertain other lovers in their heart.—I was made to accept of the cross in whatever form he pleased. Nevertheless my indwelling lusts soon appeared

appeared stronger than ever : and I feared, that I never truly received Christ into my heart ; as his rivals durst so soon take his room in it.—I became altogether indisposed for every religious duty, public and secret, till, at a private sermon by Mr. John Hepburn on Isa. lxiii. 3. I got all my bands loosed by a free gospel-offer of Christ and his salvation, and was enabled, in a very solemn manner, to accept of him for my **ALL IN ALL** on his own terms, and thankfully to give up myself wholly to him, to be saved, instructed, pardoned, purified, protected and governed by him. I panted for the most complete conformity to him, and the most intimate communion with him ; and begged that he would preserve me from the temptations of Satan and errors of the times. I was enabled to claim Him as my Lord and my God ; and he promised, that I should call him *my father, and not turn away from him.*

Having soon after an opportunity of a sacramental occasion at Prestonpans, I thought the Lord called me to attend thereat, by these two scriptures, Matth. vii. 7. “ Seek, and ye shall find ; knock, “ and it shall be opened unto you.” Rev. xiv. 4. “ Follow the Lamb whithersoever he goeth.” Notwithstanding that bodily trouble and bad weather threatened to hinder me, I got thither, and was exceedingly refreshed by our minister’s sermon on Saturday from Exod. xx. 24. in which he shewed, That Christ was coming *as a merchant* to see what his people needed ;—*as a physician* to heal the sick ;—*as a suitor* to a bride :—and *as a king* : and by Mr. Andrew’s action sermon from Mat. xxii. 4. in which he made a free and full offer of Jesus Christ and his fulness, as all **READY** for us. I took himself and the heaven and earth to witness, that I accepted the offer. Having begun the service of the first table with that word, “ What is thy request, “ queen Esther ? and it shall be granted thee,” my heart cried out, that Christ the bridegroom’s image might

might be presently stamped on my soul; that he would make me his temple, and extrude every corruption and idol; that he would enlighten my mind to understand his word; that he would pity my parents and acquaintances; and that he would purge his church, and never depart from Scotland.

But the inconceivable ocean of iniquity that lay hid in my heart quickly prevailed and embarrassed me, as much as ever. My predominant lust raged with such force and violence, as made me apprehend that I would turn out a scandal to religion. My unbelief made me look on all my former experiences as but delusion, which had never conquered my inward corruptions. My atheism, particularly with respect to God's omniscience, omnipresence, and unchangeableness in his love, and with respect to every sin's deserving his wrath and curse, greatly prevailed.—The Lord's supper was dispensed at Edinburgh: but I durst not communicate, though it was a remarkable day of power to many; and one of the sermons by Mr. Riddel from 1 Kings viii. 39. especially on the difficulty of attaining to the knowledge of the true God, was most suitable to my case. And, after I returned home, I, in secret, got a large and affecting discovery of the unparalleled evil of my unbelief. In my distress it peculiarly perplexed me, that my case was singular, and that my Christian friends not knowing it, but thinking that it went well with my soul, did not sympathize with me. But I was made to observe, that Christ trod the wine press *alone*, and could only sympathize with lonely cases; and that in kindness to me, he concealed his displeasure with me from others. It was also extremely heavy to me, that the promises of my father's conversion, Psalm lxxxviii. 10. 1 Cor. xv. 58. Isa. liii. 10. and of my own growth in grace, 1 Thess. iv. 3. Rom. vi. 14. Mat. viii. 3. Jer. xxx. 33. and xxxii. 40. appeared plainly contradicted by providence. But these scriptures, 1 Pet. i. 7. Luke

i. 45.

i. 45. Heb. ii. 3. encouraged me to wait and not utterly despair. I observed, that in scripture a storm of providence seemed ordinarily to clash with the promises made to the saints immediately after they had received them.—I saw from Psalm xxxviii. 4. 7. and xxv. 15. and xl. 1, 2. that it was my duty to wait patiently, and the Lord would, in his own time, let me see the full accomplishment of his promises, Heb. x. 23.

His other temptations being in some measure unsuccessful, Satan laboured to puff me up with self-conceit. I saw selfishness so mingled with my religious services, that I feared I had made SELF, in some form or other, my principal end in them all, not the glory of God. The observation that other Christians had been plagued with SELF, gave me no solid comfort: but I was directed to apply to Christ as my physician, who hath power over all plagues; and to consider what dreadful temptations he endured and conquered; and how he sought not his own, but his father's glory, and pleased not himself, but studied our advantage. I afterward fell under an extraordinary deadness of soul, that I could scarcely apply myself to any duty of religion.—It still added to my trouble, that my Christian friends did not pity me, but chided me for complaining to them, and asked, What better I was of that? But I found Christ a friend, when no eye would pity me. He powerfully impressed that word Isa. xlix. 15. "Can a woman forget her sucking child? —" "Yea, they may forget: yet will I not forget thee," on my heart, as I was going to our *weekly meeting for prayer*. This made me rejoice in him, and hope that, notwithstanding my singular apostacy from him, he would bring me back.—My apprehensions of my dreadful backsliding, and its dreadful consequences to my soul, made my life as in a hell upon earth.—I cried to the Lord, that he would direct

rect me where to find him ; and that he would turn me, and I should be turned. A sermon of our minister on Jer. iv. 8. " Draw nigh to God, and he " will draw near to you," was very refreshing to me.

After I came home from church, I examined for what end the Lord had permitted me to go so far out of his way ; and perceived, that it was to make me see clearly the difference between the way of sin and that of godliness ; and though I could wander out of his way, yet I could not turn into it again of myself ;—that nothing can hinder him to visit a soul when he pleaseth ; and that it is more difficult to walk on with God in his way, than to find him. This produced in me a most vehement desire for the Spirit of God to lead and keep me in his own way, and direct and enable me to perform every particular duty. And these scriptures, John xiv. 26. Matth. vij. 11. and v. 6. borne in upon my mind, made me believe that my desire should be granted.—This encouraged me to renew my covenant engagements to the Lord at his table, April 1698, and there to beg of him, that he would make me live in the Spirit ;—to be clothed in the Spirit with sincerity, humility, self denial, zeal for the interest of Christ, and love to all his ways ;—to walk in the Spirit after Christ's example, in holiness, faith and patience,—still eyeing the glory of God in every thing I did ;—and that, as a member of his mystical body, I might have a real feeling of the cases of all his fellow-children.

At the sacramental occasion of Dalkeith, I was so remarkably deserted, that I durst not approach the Lord's table. But, at another at Largs, I had most remarkable fellowship with Jesus Christ, both in public and private.—I saw that the soul of a believer could be filled with nothing but Jesus Christ. I saw, that in him, which fills the soul completely in every respect.—I had not long returned home,

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when the prevalency of my inward corruptions turned all my joys into mourning, and put me into the most polluted, and almost desperate condition. I, with terror, thought of the dreadful discovery which the Lord would make of my hypocrisy at the last day; and how men and devils would justify his final condemnation of me. Nevertheless, I ventured to go to the communion at Prestonpans, and there got some refreshment to my soul, and was enabled to pour out my heart before the Lord. But, on the general fast on account of the dearth and threatened war, I got my bands loosed in a remarkable manner, and was enabled to lament my own sins and those of the land.

About this time, my intimate companion deserted the established ministry, which occasioned to me no small concern to know my own duty. She nevertheless continued in a praying society with me, and in our intimacy in revealing the case of our soul to one another. — In secret prayer, I had often a very heaven upon earth, and particularly on the first of January 1699, which I set apart for solemn fasting, supplication, and covenanting with God. — In the first part of this year, I lived as in the suburbs of heaven, — in the second part, as in the confines of hell: and in the end of it, I met with some remarkable providences. I saw a light and glory in the scriptures, and tasted a sweetness in them, which I had never done before. I looked on all things as but loss and dung in comparison of Jesus Christ. — My heart was opened to receive him in all his offices. — Beholding myself an unparalleled sinner, I was filled with astonishment at his love in saving me. At the communion of Prestonpans, I was altogether ravished with his glory and love, and begged a share of it for my fellow Christians at home and abroad.

But, about the first of April, I fell under a more dreadful degree of soul-trouble than ever I had experienced.

perienced. Satan first decoyed me from a careful reading of the scriptures, in which at that time I found great delight. In consequence of this, great deadness seized on my spirit, that I could perform no religious service with any vigor or life. Being in so bad a case, I came from our society without praying. I had scarce began a common conversation with the family, when Satan violently tempted me, that all the promises which had been pleasant to me, were contradicted by providence; and that therefore all my pretence of believing them was but mere delusion.—I retired, and on my knees uttered many sinful and desperate expressions to the Lord. I almost resolved, that I would live in the neglect of all religious duties, as I thought it impossible for men or angels to reconcile God's promises and providences together. I therefore made shipwreck of all the promises, and was in danger of losing my reason, by means of my dreadful inward anguish. Meanwhile these scripture texts were, as it were, sounded in mine ears, "Is any thing too hard for the Lord," Gen. xviii. 14. "Heaven and earth shall pass away; but not one jot or title of the law shall fail," Luke xvi. 17. Mat. v. 18. "Of all that the Lord hath spoken, not one word hath failed," Josh. xxiii. 14. "Be not afraid: only believe," Mark v. 36. But such was the unbelief and atheism of my heart, that I could believe nothing. I questioned the reality of religion in general. I was tempted to burn all the records of former experiences, as in hell it would fill me with torments to hear of them.—I fell under a deep melancholy, which hurt my body. I told my case to none, as I knew that none could help me. My former experiences afforded me no more comfort, than former sight would do a man after his eyes were put out. When I went to sacramental occasions, I found nothing but an absent God. But some dark views which I obtained at two of them, pierced me to the
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very heart with grief, that I should have, at Satan's desire, laid aside these duties, in which God had so singularly met with my soul, and so resisted and quenched the motions of his Spirit.

Hearing a sermon in November with much weariness and wandering, I sat very impatiently while a child was baptized. A dog bit my leg most desperately. A physician who came accidentally to our house, applied some medicines, which healed the most dangerous wound. In this I saw mercy rejoicing against judgment. Soon after, my brother fell into a fever. While I was concerned for him, these words occurred, John xi. 4. "This sickness is not unto death, but for the glory of God,"—and afterward, Mat. viii. 26. "Why are ye so fearful, O ye of little faith?" Isa. xxxviii. 5. "I have heard thy prayers. I have seen thy tears. I have added to his days," &c. He still grew worse and worse. And after he began to recover, he relapsed into a second fever, much more dangerous than the first. This filled me with dreadful perplexity, as I thought, that if he died, I would reckon, that all the other promises which had been sweet to my soul, would also fail of accomplishment to me.—I was also affrighted from prayer. But while I was meditating before I essayed it, the Lord by his word taught my soul, that *he was my salvation*; that *through manifold tribulations we must enter into the kingdom of God*; and that *I ought not to despise the chastening of the Lord, nor be weary of his correction*, Psalm xxxv. 3. Acts xiv. 22. Prov. iii. 11.—Encouraged by these, I applied to prayer, in which my unbelief durst not appear before the Lord. By that word, Psal. cxviii. 17, 18. "I shall not die, but live, and declare the works of the Lord. He hath chastened me sore, but not given over to death," he assured me of my brother's recovery, which soon after happened. But that word, *Be not weary of his correction*, running still in my mind, made me lay my account with

some further trouble, or even the loss of some relation.

During my brother's second fever, I had many hours of sweet fellowship with God. But the fright I had got, flowing into my breast, produced a most troublesome boil in it. Though I would not permit any physician to lay his hand on it, the Lord blessed some simple medicines for my recovery, and filled my mouth with songs of praise.—While the spiritual condition of my aged father lay very heavy on my heart, I was informed, that he had been taken with a purging and vomiting of blood. On seeing him, I represented to him, that he was dying, and begged him to lay to heart the eternal concerns of his salvation. He gave me little answer but by grievous looks. My soul was overwhelmed with fear, lest all the requests which I had presented to God for him, should come to nothing; and that he would be a castaway. I, by myself, and with a companion, wrestled with the Lord for his conversion. We, as well as others that pled for him at the throne of grace, had great liberty in so doing. On the day of his death, these words, "The devil is gone out of thy daughter," Mark vii. 29. "—Ye are compleat in him, who is the head of all principality and power," Col. ii. 10. "He shall be mine in that day that I make up my jewels, and I will spare him as a man doth his son that serveth him," Mal. iii. 16. impressed on my mind, produced in me a sweet inward composure. And, after his death, I, with thankfulness, observed the mercies mingled with his trouble and death.

Still that word, Prov. iii. 11. haunted my mind, and made me expect some further trials. Soon after I received a very unseasonable, imprudent, and unchristian information of the loss of a considerable part of my worldly property, by means of a near and dear relation. But that word, "Thou art my
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"sure portion, O Lord," Psalm cxix. 57. borne in on my mind, produced more solid comfort and joy, than if I had been told, that I was made heir to the most powerful and wealthy monarch.—I was led into many useful meditations on the vanity and uncertainty of all temporal enjoyments.

On the third of February, 1700, a most dreadful fire brake out in the meal market, which, being enraged by a strong wind, burnt so furiously, that none durst come near to quench it. The spark flew over a great part of the city, and put me in mind of Sodom and of hell. The parliament close in a flame that ascended into the midst of heaven. Before this happened, I had for some time a dreadful impression of fire on my spirit.—A smell of fire had been perceived about that place several days before, without any discoverable cause. It began at his house who delivered the covenant to the hangman to be burnt, and who never after that, had the wonted use of his hand, with which he delivered it, though he lamented his deed while he lived. It stopt just where the covenant was burnt; which made many cry out, *This is come upon us for the burning of the covenant.* In respect of the uselessness of all human help in stopping it;—in its rendering many families destitute;—in its regardlessness to all ranks;—and in its destroying only outward enjoyments, it not a little resembled the preceding Prelatic persecution.—It made me plainly perceive the extreme folly of those who trust in worldly riches.

About seven weeks after, the Lord's supper was dispensed in the city. But though it was a time of power and comfort to many, my own peevishness made it a very dark and uncomfortable communion to me.—Soon after, I met with a very heavy trial from an airth which I did not expect, and which seemed to contradict the promise of God to me.—But I was enabled to be dumb, because the Lord had done it: and I was by it instructed in the impropriety

propriety of trusting to friends or relations.—Meeting with a companion, whose fellowship had often been refreshful to me, we prayed together before we parted, with great enlargement of heart.

It was thought proper, that I should return to a family, which I thought I had left, at the call of God, on *account of the want of the worship of God in it*, and the contention and mocking at religion and ministers which prevailed in it. In compliance with my mother's urgency, I went back, contrary to my own light and inclination, and found them rather worse than better. *In consequence whereof, the Lord sensibly departed from me* in religious duties. In secret prayer, I was plagued with sleepiness or wandering of mind. A terrible discontentment commenced in my mind, that nothing could be pleasant to me. Spiritual plagues of all sorts seized on me, so that, for two years, I did not enjoy one full day of inward ease and quiet.—Sometimes, however, the Lord enabled me to pour my complaints into his bosom; and on Sabbath he gave me some tokens of his love, in enabling me to plead with him, or in promising me deliverance, Psalm lxvi. 19, 20.—But, through the week, I was like a beast before him. There was such a difference between the condition of my soul on Sabbath and other days, that I often wished for two Sabbaths in the week.

I had no small pleasure in hearing Mr. W. Mitchel's discourses on Rom. vi. 12. relative to the power of indwelling sin. I earnestly longed for the destruction of my own. By sermons of Mr. J. Moncrief on Rev. xxii. 17. I was led out to a renewed solemn acceptance of Jesus Christ, as offered in the gospel.

—On the fast day before our sacrament, I got a very extensive view of the sins of the land, and tokens of the Lord's wrath against it, and of my own sinfulness of heart and life: and was enabled, with brokenness of heart, to bewail them before the Lord; and to wrestle with him, that he would pardon

don, and purge from, them. Not finding relief for my soul, in hearing the sermons on Saturday, I resolved to spend the night in prayer, till I should find an habitation for the Lord. After I had wrestled three or four hours for others, I got remarkable liberty in laying my own case before the Lord, and in supplicating mercies answerable to my need, and in devoting myself to him according to the covenant of grace. I had scarcely entered the place of public worship on Sabbath, when Satan began to buffet me. I was exceedingly distressed, that I could not see my name among those invited to the Lord's table, till at the end, our minister invited such as had a *nameless* case, to come, that Christ might make language of it. At the table, I was enabled to make a solemn surrender of myself to Jesus Christ, that he might dislodge all my idols,—destroy all my sinful corruptions,—supply all my wants,—and enable me to cleave to himself, and all his truths, and to perform whatever he required of me, chiefly aiming at his glory.

Finding that I could not stay in the family, with a good conscience, I, in every prayer, besought the Lord to relieve me. It was an inexpressible ease to my mind, when the day appointed for my departure drew nigh. But, the very night before, I was seized by a fever, and thus detained a while longer. I knew not what to think of his providence. My body recovered, but I perceived no amendment in the frame and disposition of my spirit. It added to my grief, that some of my godly friends urged me to stay in the family, as I might be useful to it. But I more and more clearly saw it my duty to leave it.—The death of K. William lay very heavy on me, as it did on the hearts of all the godly, while the profane Jacobites exceedingly rejoiced and insulted.—After I had attended two sacramental occasions, at which my soul was not generally in a good frame, though I experienced some touches of the Lord's power

power and grace, and men with some seasonable encouragement to sing of the judgment of remaining corruptions, as well as of divine desertions,—I, with great satisfaction of mind, left the family in which I was.

As, a little before, I had enjoyed great refreshment to my own soul in wrestling with the Lord in behalf of a dying professor whose life had been untender, and in prayer and spiritual converse a whole night at one of the communions I had lately been at; so my attendance on some others, was now crowned with much useful instruction, or delightful enlargement to my soul; and I was enabled solemnly to take hold of Jesus Christ, as offered to me in the gospel, for wisdom, righteousness, sanctification and redemption, and to devote myself wholly to him in life and in death.

After I had been some short time at Dalkeith, and at Innerkeithing, in both of which places I enjoyed satisfaction in the ordinances of God, I returned to Edinburgh at Martinmas 1702. I met with a sharp trial from the hand of a near relation; but was made to see that it was God's correction of me on account of my grieving his Spirit; that my kind father had mixed my cup; and that many of the Lord's people had been trysted with such trials.

In the beginning of 1703, we were exceedingly apprehensive of the toleration, if not re-establishment of Prelacy: but God, by throwing the Parliament into confusion on that point, prevented their doing any thing; and so graciously answered our prayers. Retiring to East Lothian, I, at sacramental and other occasions, found God remarkably present in his ordinances. Leaving this place, I came to the *Inch*, where I found favour with those with whom I lived, and the Lord continued his favours towards me; and gave me remarkable, but short lived victories over my corruptions, which did easily beset me.

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In 1704, the Lord, at first, led me out to sweet meditations on what I had been seeking, gotten from and given to Jesus Christ. But, by my neglecting to watch and fight against my predominant lusts, my inward plagues increased upon me. The different parties in my soul bestirring themselves, I was terrified, lest I should prove an hypocrite, and turn out a stumbling-block to others. My fears, that the Lord had left me, were like to sink me.— But, in public ordinances, or in secret, or in converse with the godly, and especially in hearing a sermon on John xii. 26. I had my soul powerfully melted with the love of Christ; and my heart burnt with desire to follow and serve him. But my prosperous state was soon turned into misery. About a fortnight after, a servant fell into a fever; and as I was much impressed with her death, I wrestled with the Lord to prepare her for the eternal state. Being much fatigued, I cast myself on a bed in the next room. In a moment the candle which I had with me, kindled the hangings. But, providentially, one came to the door. I got up like one half distracted, and put out the flame at the expence of burning my own hands. I was in a terror lest the fright might have hastened the death of the sick person, and so it be chargeable on me. This shut me up to solemn prayer and supplication to God for both her and myself. And though my body was in extremity of pain, it was a pleasant night to my soul. I beheld the *Sun of righteousness arise with healing under his wings*. I saw that, in this dispensation of the burning, God had an holy hand, reproving me for a flame of passion, in which I had been a few days before. I saw that Satan had a malicious, and I had a careless hand in it.

Notwithstanding some blinks of the Lord's countenance at the communions of Dalkeith, Libberton, Lathwade, and Leith, I was generally oppressed with sore distress of mind. I thought all the Lord's prom-

mises of my sanctification were manifestly contradicted by providence. My atheism and unbelief haunted me like a ghost, go where I would. I lost my inclination to religious duties, and had no strength to oppose my spiritual enemies. I was a terror to myself.—My fellow Christians being ignorant of my case, none of them could sympathize with me. I urged scripture promises upon myself, to encourage my hopes of an outgate; but my unbelief swallowed up all my comforts, and left me in distress.—The Lord supported me by these scriptures Jer. xxx. 7. Num. xxiii. 19. and Hos. xiv. 3.—By a sermon of a stranger minister on Psal. xxxi. 23. “O love the Lord, all ye his saints,” especially after I came home, to consider what the Lord had done for my soul, even more than he had done for many of his dear children; how ungratefully I had bestowed the love due to him upon his rivals, who no way deserved it; and that he was yet willing to give me new proofs of his love, notwithstanding all that I had done. The whole xvi. of Ezekiel was presented to me as a just picture of myself.—Under this discovery, I longed to be with him, where there could be no parting or sinning.—I was led to admire, that, though under my spiritual distempers, I alway expected the Lord to come against me in some dreadful judgment, yet when he comes, it is wholly in love, not in terror.—O how I wished for *wings like a dove, that I might fly away, and be at rest above!*

In the end of 1704, I was oppressed by trouble of mind: but in the beginning of 1705, had my spirits composed, and was enabled to attend to religious duties with more calmness.—I had different trials of reproach in the families that I lived in: but the Lord supported me under them, and kept me, or religion, from suffering by them, in the issue.—My spirits were much oppressed with the *Uniting* of our nation with England on terms contrary to our solemn covenant engagements to God,
and

the sad consequences which I apprehended would and did issue from it. I cried mightily to the Lord to preserve and revive his covenanted work of reformation among us.—Returning to Gilmerton in East Lothian, I, in hearing of Mr. Finlay of Prestonhall, at sacramental occasions, and on ordinary Sabbaths, had my soul much refreshed. Nevertheless, I had no small distress of mind through apprehension that God's providences to me were contradicting his promises; and through the dreadful prevalency of my predominant and other indwelling corruptions.—I thought myself like a travailing woman, having many violent pangs, every one of them as if she would just be delivered, and yet bringing forth nothing but wind,—or like a ship tossed by storms, sometimes near land, and yet, by a contrary wind, driven without sight of it; and like a bird pursued from place to place by the hawk.—One time, when in agony of soul I was belching forth before the Lord my infernal complaints of the irreconcilableness of his providences with his promises, and resolving to give up with religion altogether, he darted into my mind, *Dost thou well to be angry?* Jonah iv. 4, 9—Oh, how my soul was struck with wonder and astonishment at his unparalleled forbearance and kindness.—I desired to mourn over these things in my conduct, which had offended my so kind and gracious Lord: but, alas! alas! my corrupt heart!

I nevertheless quickly relapsed into my doubts of the reality of my grace, and of the reconcilableness of God's providences to his promises.—I cried bitterly for deliverance: but the more I used means to remove my plagues, they stuck the closer to me. Being unskillful and unfit for my business, I begged the Lord would direct me to manage things to my master and mistress's satisfaction. He granted my request in a degree that astonished me.—Sir David Kinloch's family going to London, I could not think

of going along with them.—Providence, in a few days after, fixed me mistress of the *Trades Hospital*.—The Lord directed me to execute this office far beyond my expectation. In prayer with, and instruction of the children, I often felt sensible assistance, with power and life to my own soul.—But, alas ! when I was at secret duty, I had no life, nor sap ; and thought I had been all my days a painted hypocrite.—Such strange contradictions were in my case.—At once, I was overwhelmed with several kinds of outward trouble ; violent temptations from Satan to atheism, unbelief, and quarreling with God ;—dreadfully raging inward corruptions ;—and, which was heaviest of all, an absent and angry Lord. These things so disheartened and disquieted me, that I had neither heart nor hand for religious duties, but was altogether dead, senseless, and secure. An eruption of passion occasioned by my overbearing one sadly reproach me, helped on the bad frame of my soul.—But in secret and public exercises at our sacramental occasion, I had my soul searched, and my hands remarkably loosed. All my former experiences were cleared up as truly gracious. The promises of God's covenant were set before me in their fulness, freedom, and infallible firmness ; and I was enabled to lay hold on, and claim them as the ground of my sure hope, and to devote my whole self to Jesus Christ, as made of God to me, wisdom, righteousness, sanctification and redemption, that he might instruct, justify, sanctify, and save me.

N. B. Her experiences after her marriage, if recorded, were never published.

VII. Life of JOHN RONALD in Edin.

MY original corruption appeared very early in a remarkable aversion at instruction ;— in a spurning and repining at all proper reproof or correction ;—in manifold forms of actual transgressions in both heart and life. But, about the 7th and 10th years of my life, the Lord began to deal with my soul, as a Spirit of bondage. I had been so ignorant as to have next to no apprehensions of death ; but, one of my companions speaking with some concern about it, I began to think of it ; and the thoughts of it were often very heavy and terrible to me. The public execution of some persons for murder also made me concerned, how to get thro' the world, without bringing myself to such a shameful end. None of these impressions affected me with any real conviction of sin, or care about the salvation of my soul ; nor did they make me apply to God for support under, or relief from, my inward distress.

My parents circumstances now required them to put me into Herriot's hospital, where I fell under the ministry of Mr. Hart, an alarming preacher. I began to be convinced of my commission of actual sins, and omission of my commanded duties, and of my duty to seek the Lord in the days of my youth. His sermons from Eccl. xii. 1. and Eph. ii. 12. were peculiarly affecting to me. I formed resolutions to become serious about the salvation of my soul. My heart trembled when I heard the awful demands of the law explained : but it was not inwardly melted. On diversified pretexts and excuses, I deferred all performance of that which was necessary to promote my eternal happiness.

Between

Between the 10th and 17th years of my life, I was terribly harrassed with the temptations of Satan. He, by different artifices, and, with great violence, insisted that I should *give him my soul*. Notwithstanding that my soul actually loathed it, struggled against it; and complained against it, he forced it on me, over the belly of all conviction and opposition, almost constantly, for six or seven years.—To induce me to a compliance, he laboured to persuade me, that God neither did, nor could be thought to have elected, from all eternity, such a poor, silly, vile creature; and so it was impossible for me to be saved. He represented to me, that I would have multitudes of companions in going to hell, and but few in going to heaven. He suggested, that I might perform all the duties of religion, so as all my acquaintances would take me for a great saint; and that I might even take my Bible with me, and there read it and be good, and the Lord would be merciful to me, and inflict a little lesser punishment on me.

My spirits being fatigued by his long and violent harrassments; and all hope or care about the eternal salvation of my soul almost gone, he attacked me, one night, when I had fallen asleep in the time of prayer, with uncommon force and subtlety.—I apprehended, that my heart yielded to him; and immediately awaked under inexpressible terror, horror, and distraction of mind. Now, my own conscience, in a terrible manner, charged me with yielding to Satan. My apprehension, that I was now his by my own donation, were so terrible, that I would have given ten thousand worlds to have had any hopes of recovery or salvation. I often thought myself as sure of hell as if I were in it already.—When sitting by the fire, I often thought how dreadful it would be for me to burn, thro' all eternity, under the infinite wrath of God. I often put my finger or hand to the fire, that I might feel the torment

ment of that which was but a faint emblem of that which I was to suffer for ever. I even sometimes imagined, that I saw in the fire representations of men burning in hell. My case was the more dreadful, as I did not lay it before the Lord, and could not deal with him as my God in Christ.— I durst not tell it to any other, lest they should presently kill me, as one unfit to be permitted to live on earth. Satan still pressed me to surrender my soul to him, as violently as ever.

Notwithstanding I reckoned my case desperate, I laboured to find out, if any had ever been so carried away by the temptations of Satan. I began to apply myself more closely to religious duties, and laid myself open to the word preached; but I could find nothing that could reach my case. I had full and free offers of Christ and his salvation: but I thought there was something so singular in my condition, as excluded me from the benefit of them. I began to have some notion of praying in the name of Christ: but I had no spiritual knowledge of Christ, or of God as in him.

Under my long continued distress, my exercise became more and more diversified. Satan laboured to persuade me, that, as I was not elected, all my diligence in duty was to no purpose. I was so ignorant, that I could say nothing to the contrary.— He laboured to fill my thoughts with the most horrid and blasphemous thoughts of God.—I had often such impressions of my own guilt and loathsomeness, and of God's dreadful perfections, that I durst not look up to the clouds, for fear of some sudden stroke to hurry me into eternal misery. When I went to bed, I was terrified that my awakening would be in hell. When I awakened in the morning, I was afraid of some sudden stroke before night. The terrors of the Lord drank up my spirit; and I was like to go distracted under them, Psalm lxxvii. 2, 3, 4. and lxxxviii. 15. When I tried to ease my mind

mind with diversion, the terror of my mind forced me to leave it, and retire to bemoan my case.—To hinder me from secret prayer, Satan made me terrified to be alone in the dark, lest he should appear to me in a visible shape. I, in a great measure, concealed my trouble, which made it prey the more dreadfully upon my spirits. Satan persuaded me, that I had sinned the unpardonable sin against the Holy Ghost, which exceedingly increased the anguish of my soul.—Perceiving, one day, that those serious companions whom I frequented, behaved shyly towards me, I was tempted to think, that the Lord had discovered my reprobate state to them, which had made them forsake me.—My conscience being now awakened, I stood convinced of many sins, which had never before given me any trouble.—The threatenings of God's law on account of my sins, were so fearfully impressed on my mind, that I often wished I had never been born, or had been formed a beast. I would have given a world to have had my soul in the stead of any soul of my companions; as I thought there were hopes of mercy for them, but none for me. A sentence of eternal condemnation being already passed in my own conscience against me, I thought myself wholly and irrevocably cast off by God.—Nevertheless, the Lord secretly supported me, and kept me attending gospel-ordinances, particularly secret prayer;—ministers were helped to speak as particularly to my case, as if God had informed them of it.

When my soul was brought very low, and pining away in my blood of dreadful wounds, and no hand to help or eye to pity me, Ezek. xvi. 4. 5. Psalm cxlii. 4. the Lord, by the preaching of the gospel, discovered to me the way of life and salvation thro Christ. I was made to see, that all mankind are, by nature, in a lost and perishing condition. I not only had deep impressions of my lost estate by nature,

ture, but of my being my own destroyer, *Hos. xiii.*
 9. I was instructed, that God, in the depth of his infinite wisdom, had contrived a way of salvation for sinful men, through his own Son; that Jesus Christ had, in consequence of his undertaking for them, assumed our nature, and therein obeyed and suffered every thing necessary for the salvation of elect men: I had the most full and free offers of grace and salvation in and through him, made to me. The Spirit of God pursued me from one refuge of lies to another, till all refuges failed me, and Christ appeared as the only and last refuge, to which I could betake myself: and indeed I found him the sweetest, surest, and safest. I was made to see, that salvation was to be had only in and through him: and that, in coming to him, I behoved to renounce all my own good dispositions, thoughts, words, or works in point of righteousness and justification before God. In giving up with these, especially such as I thought, I had enjoyed remarkable assistance from God in, I had no small difficulty; but, by gradually discovering their insufficiency, and the method of eternal life through the righteousness of Christ; and that his and mine could by no means be mingled together, he made me to yield. I was powerfully determined to an earnest desire and longing for deliverance from sin and wrath, as well as from the continued gnawings of my own conscience: and all other ways of life and salvation failing, I was content to have it on any terms.

Satan fearing, that he was to be soon cast out, did all that he could to keep me from Christ: but the Holy Ghost enabled me to perceive the vanity and falshood of his suggestions. A minister in his sermon laboured to persuade me, that without particular confession of my sins, there could be no general pardon of them. This I could not do, nor could I think of confessing my yielding to Satan's temptation to give him my soul, without shame and

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blushing. But, the Lord impressing my mind with the thoughts, that all my sins would be laid open before the whole world at the last day, I therefore essayed to make a particular acknowledgment of them, and to flee from them to Jesus Christ for pardon and washing through his blood. But, for a while, this was only done in a superficial manner.—I greatly feared, that I had sinned the sin against the Holy Ghost. But, by a sermon of Mr. Reid, I found that I had not sinned it, since I was, in some measure, willing to part with sin, and to come to Jesus Christ for life and salvation. I saw that my conscience could not charge me with all the ingredients contained in the ordinary description of it.—I saw now, that Jesus Christ was able to save me: but I doubted, if he was willing; or, if I was within his commission. But, by his holding forth unto me his absolute, full, and free promises, such as Rev. xxii. 17. "Whosoever will, let him come, and take the water of life freely," Isa. lv. 1. "Ho, every one that thirsteth, come." Matth. xi. 28. "Come unto me all ye that labour, and are heavy laden; and I will give you rest." John vi. 37. "Him that cometh unto me, I will in no wise cast out." And by reading a discourse on this subject, I was instructed, that if I was willing to be saved by Christ, it was a sure evidence, that he was willing to save me; as my willingness to be saved by him, could only proceed from his willingness to save me. In the view of these things, the Lord enabled me to reason thus with myself, Here are absolute, full and free promises of salvation, in which none are excepted, but those that will not have it. From God's word, I find, that all sinners of every sort or rank are called to receive it, *without money, and without price*. This encouraged me to venture my soul upon this way of salvation through Christ, and I essayed to believe upon, and embrace him.—But Satan still raged; I had not yet experienced the day

day of Jesus' power ; and my nature was still unrenewed.

But about March 1709, in the 7th year of my life, while I was employed in quiet prayer, amidst no small fear and dread, the Lord favoured me with a most powerful, and heart-quickening and captivating discovery of himself. In the light of his own word, he manifested himself in his natures,—in the several divine persons, stations, and work in promoting our redemption.—In this light, I had a bright enlightening view of the Son of God in my nature, as through his undertaking and accomplishment of the great work of redemption,—my only way to the Father, and mean of peace with him. The eyes of my soul were fixed upon Christ, as my atoning and reconciling sacrifice, in whose obedience and sufferings imputed to me, I could only be pardoned and accepted before God, according to the exceeding riches, and to the praise of the glory of his grace.—I, as a guilty, self destroying sinner, was determined and enabled, willingly, to accept of Jesus Christ, as the Lord my righteousness, desiring to be found under the covert of his blood.—The Lord proclaimed his name before me, as the Lord God merciful and gracious, pardoning iniquity, transgression and sin in Christ. He, in his own light, clearly manifested to me full and unhampered right and warrant to lay hold upon Christ as the Lord my righteousness, for pardon and salvation.—He gave me a broad view of the absolute promises, offers, and invitations of the gospel, in order to encourage me to come to Christ. He gave me an extensive view of my sins, as committed against an infinitely great, glorious, gracious and merciful God, and made me kindly acknowledge, that he would be just though, on account of them, he should for ever condemn me to the lowest hell. My soul having got a saving discovery of Christ, and being powerfully drawn out after him, and God as my reconciling

ciled God in him, I was enabled to make a full, free, ingenuous and particular confession of all my sins, transgressions and iniquities, which my conscience charged upon me, and kindly to lament over them, and earnestly beg for the pardon of them, however unparalleled in their nature or aggravations, only through, and on account of Jesus' blood. —I was enabled to plead with God upon his own free offers and absolute promises of Christ and salvation through him, —and cordially and solemnly to declare my acceptance of him in all his offices, relations, and fulness, and of God in him, as my alone and all-sufficient portion. —I was enabled cheerfully and heartily to renounce all my own righteousness, and to give up with the service of sin, Satan and the world; and to cry for victory over all my former lords and lovers, through Jesus' blood. —I was enabled to devote myself wholly and for ever to him alone, that he might sanctify as well as save me, renew all the powers of my soul, render all the members of my body instruments of righteousness, and dispose of me and all that pertained to me, as best answered the purposes of his glory. I was enabled to give up to him all my sins to be washed away in his blood, all my plagues to be healed by him, and all my wants to be supplied in, by, and through him. —I was enabled, in the strength of his grace, to resolve to be for Christ, and not for another; to proclaim and wage war in his name and strength, against sin, Satan, and the world; —and to seek, serve, fear, and obey him all the days of my life. —I was enabled earnestly to cry to him for his Spirit to teach, lead, strengthen and uphold me; and that he would never leave me nor forsake me. —In fine, the Holy Ghost, as a Spirit of light and life in Christ Jesus, sweetly, powerfully, and efficaciously entered into my soul, filling it with a marvellous and satisfying composure and joy, delight and success in religious exercises.

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My joy and peace in believing had not long continued, when I began to doubt of my saving interest in Christ, and to fear that the work wrought in me was not really gracious. The sacrament happening to be dispensed soon after, my father told me, that as he had devoted me to the Lord in baptism, it was now my duty to dedicate myself to him in the sacrament of his supper. Notwithstanding my fears concerning myself, and the hindrance which I met with from Satan and my lusts,—I, after a solemn confession of my sins before the Lord, and fleeing from them all to the blood and grace of Jesus Christ; and asking forgiveness of my parents with respect to what offences I had given them,—ventured forward, and with much cheerfulness commemorated the dying love of Jesus Christ. Mr. Plenderleith's sermon on Saturday from Hos. xi. 4. that scripture Song iv. 16. which I had been praying over, and v. 1. in the service of the table, and the lines of Psalm xxii. 9, 10. sung when I was going from it, were very pleasant to me. I went away rejoicing in Spirit, and was helped to continue seeking Jesus of Nazareth, and more and more spiritual knowledge of him. And after the Lord had graciously renewed my heart, the faculties of my soul appeared more enlarged, and my mind was more enlightened, my will more renewed, my memory more sanctified, and disposed to retain spiritual truths, and my affections more and more set upon their proper object.

Not long after, I attended a sacramental occasion at Leith, where, notwithstanding manifold fears concerning my saving interest in Jesus Christ, I, at the Lord's table, had some measure of composure and earnest outgoing of heart after him. But, after this, I fell into great depth of spiritual trouble, which issued in my fartherest blishment in the Lord's way. I was strongly tempted to believe, That there

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was no God, and sadly complied therewith. My thoughts could not comprehend his existence from all eternity; and therefore strongly doubted the truth of it. My soul was filled with the most dreadful thoughts concerning this. I cried to the Lord for saving discoveries of himself, and laboured to oppose the atheistical thoughts which were forced upon me. I retired to the fields for prayer and meditation. I there viewed the creatures around, below or above me, and asked my soul, Whence all these could proceed, if there was not a God, who had created them? By reading the reasoning of *Vincent* in his catechism on this point, I obtained more light and knowledge concerning the existence of God. But it was the word of God powerfully applied to my soul by the Holy Ghost, in its own light and efficacy, that settled me in the faith of his existence. I had afterward no small exercise of mind concerning the *Trinity of persons in the Godhead*, and the *proper divinity of Jesus Christ*. But, by the powerful application of that text, John xiv. 20. "At that day, ye shall know that I am in my Father, and you in me, and I in you," my mind was sweetly enlightened and calmed; and I saw that it was my duty to believe what the scriptures testify concerning these truths, and suspend my perfect apprehension of them, till I see him face to face. *Vincent's* proofs of the true godhead of the Father, Son, and Holy Ghost were likewise very useful for my instruction and confirmation in this matter.

Notwithstanding my perplexity, I ventured to partake of the Lord's supper in March 1711, but with little or no sensible comfort to my soul. But going into the fields for meditation on Monday afternoon, that word Hos. ii. 19. "I will betrothe thee unto me for ever; yea, I will betrothe thee unto me in righteousness and in judgment, and in loving kindness and in mercies," was darted into my soul with so much power, light and life, as plain y

plainly marked it to have come from God,—and relieved me from my inward distress, and irresistibly drew out my whole heart to Jesus Christ.— Nevertheless, it was not long, when, through the strength of my corruptions, my formality in religious exercises, and the temptations of Satan, I was again plunged into doubts and fears, particularly with respect to my holding out in a time of persecution. But, by a sermon of Mr. Mitchel, I was instructed, That the Lord gives out no more of his grace to his people, than what their present duty calls for; and that therefore it was my duty alway to depend upon Jesus Christ for grace and strength to perform every piece of duty, which and when he called for at my hand. I was further confirmed by another note at the service of the Lord's table, at which I soon after communicated, hinting, That if I had engaged to follow Christ in his, not in my own strength, his grace would be sufficient for me, and his strength made perfect in my weakness, 2 Cor. xiii. 9. which came with such power, light and life, as to deliver me from all my fears on this head, and enabled me to come away rejoicing in God my strength.

Notwithstanding all the gracious manifestations of the Lord's special loving kindness, which I had enjoyed, my own unwatchfulness, neglect of duty, particular failures, or the Lord's withdrawal of his sensible presence from me, still occasioned much doubting of my saving interest in Jesus Christ. I could not deny his work on my soul: but I would have had more sensible and particular evidence of his love. I even envied their happiness, who had a distinct, sensible assurance of their interest in Jesus Christ, and would have given a world to have such assurance of my own interest in him. In secret prayer, I, in great agony, made a very solemn, but not altogether cautious, dedication of myself to him, wholly and only, after which he gradually cleared up

up my interest in himself. At a sacrament at Inneresk, I thought I felt no sensible impressions of the Spirit of God ; and nevertheless afterward felt more of inward strength for duty, love to God, and his way, than I had done before. Being soon after remarkably deserted at the sermons on Saturday, at the communion of Leith, I retired to the fields for prayer and meditation, and in my usual manner on such occasions, endeavoured solemnly to confess my iniquities before the Lord, renew my acceptance of him, and dedicate myself unto him. But my heart being quite dull, dead and lifeless, I took my Bible, in order to try if he would quicken me by his own word. I read the 45th chapter of Isaiah with great satisfaction ; but the 24th and 25th verses, " Surely
 " shall one say, In the Lord have I righteousness
 " and strength —In the Lord shall all the seed of
 " Israel be justified, and shall glory," were applied to my heart with inexpressible power, light and life. I found them, and did eat them, and they were to me the joy and rejoicing of my heart. With the most ravishing pleasure and satisfaction, I saw, and acquiesced in, Jesus Christ as my all sufficient **ALL IN ALL**, in whom alone I had righteousness to justify me before God, and strength to enable me to the performance of every duty. I perceived more clearly than ever before, what a God Jehovah was in him to my soul. All my spiritual bands were loosed, and prayer and other religious duties were my pleasure and delight.—But, alas ! it was not long when this lively and delightful frame was exchanged for wonted doubts and fears.

As the ministry of Mr. Hart had been very useful to me in the beginning of my concern about salvation, I had an earnest desire to hear him again, when I was labouring under doubts about my interest in Christ. He preached from Psal. xvi. 2. " O my
 " soul, thou hast said unto the Lord, Thou art my
 " Lord,"

"Lord," and chiefly insisted on the marks of such as might warrantably call the Lord *their Lord*, viz. a person's seeing his own utterly lost and undone state by nature, and having sin made bitter to him, his seeing no help in himself, or in any other creature; his having a discovery of the Lord Jesus Christ as the alone Saviour of lost sinners, and being heartily pleased with the way of life and salvation in him; and being powerfully determined to close with, receive, and rest upon him for life and salvation, as freely offered in the gospel, &c.—These hints were of marvellous efficacy for the settlement of my mind concerning my saving interest in, and actual possession of Jesus Christ. And ever since, though I have been trysted with manifold withdrawments of his sensible presence, for holy and wise ends known to himself, I never dare call my interest in him, and his love and favour to me into question, but, like Jesus Christ, cry unto him.—
 "My God, my God, why hast thou forsaken me?"

—For my further establishment, I was directed to hear many of his sent servants, who more distinctly preached the Lord Jesus Christ, and the way of life and salvation in and through him, and how to live on, and walk in him by faith.

Notwithstanding all these manifestations of God's love to my soul, Satan very often upbraided me with my yielding to his temptations to give him my soul. After I had frequently laid the matter before the Lord, without any sensible deliverance, I went to a sacramental occasion at Carnock; and there, at the Lord's table, served by Mr. Hamilton, my case was exactly and in a most lively manner represented, and Jesus Christ held forth as the only remedy; and the taking new grips of him urged as the only mean of cure and restoration. My soul was drawn out towards him, in a most vigorous manner, as held forth for the curing of all the bites and stings of the old serpent; and I felt cure and

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ing imparted to my heart, and went away triumphing over Satan through Jesus Christ. Nor have I ever since felt much uneasiness of this kind in my spirit. A sermon of Mr. Cuthbert, whom, as well as Messrs. Mair and M'Laren, the Lord made singularly useful to me, on Zech. iii. 2. "The Lord rebuke thee, O Satan; even the Lord that hath chosen Jerusalem rebuke thee. Is not this a brand pluckt out of the fire?" in which he represented the marks of those that had been pluckt out of the fire, proved exceedingly comfortable and establishing to my soul.

Hitherto I had been exceedingly retired in my religious exercises; but now found some inclination to Christian company. My bashfulness however hindered me from making acquaintance.—Having one Sabbath conversed a little to my edification with a pious lad, I said, that it was a pity there was not more Christian converse among professors. He hinted to me, that he and some others met once a week for prayer and spiritual conference; and if I pleased I might join them. I consented. Upon this Satan and my own wicked heart exceedingly harassed me with suggestions, that I would mar the duty, as I had not sense to pray in public before others. I laid my case before the Lord; and he impressed on my mind that word, Psalm xxvii. 14. "Wait on the Lord: be of good courage, and he shall strengthen thine heart: wait, I say, upon the Lord," which afforded me present comfort and relief: but that *oath of abjuration* which did so much hurt to the church of Scotland, occasioned the dissolution of our praying society, as we differed in our judgment concerning the conduct of our minister. I soon after joined with another society of more experienced Christians, in which I have found much of the Lord's presence, and much true Christian familiarity and affection.

Before

Before the Lord cleared up my saving interest in himself, he dealt with me as with a young child, in laying my spiritual food to my hand, and in bearing me up, and delivering me in a most particular way. But since he clearly manifested it, he makes me cry and seek for my food. Nevertheless, I must own to the praise of the glory of his grace, that I have enjoyed many sensible manifestations of his kindness. What Bethels and Peniels I have had at Carnock, Airth, Dunfermline, Torryburn, Culross, South ferry, Abercorn and Gladsmuir, where I attended sacramental occasions, and in the tollbooth kirk! O how much soul sweetness I found in my Lord's service!—What a kind master he hath been to me!—By what a secret, but gracious hand, he bore me up, and carried me, step by step, to himself!—And since, what satisfaction my soul hath had in fellowship with him, and in discerning my interest in the Lord Jesus Christ! What then must the immediate, the eternal enjoyment of him be!—He is Lord of his own grace and fulness, and keeps the measure of letting it out in his own hand. I was scarcely ever at a sacramental occasion, but I either met with humbling discoveries of myself, or comforting and transforming discoveries of Jesus Christ. Notwithstanding my alternate *nights and days* in the case of my soul, I have attained more stability in the way of my God under his hidings, than when I had more of his sensible presence. Notwithstanding all the prevalency of deadness, darkness, atheism and unbelief, in, and over me, I durst not, for these several years, ever doubt of my new covenant relation to, and interest in him. And tho' I have not alway the pleasant life of sensible joy and comfort, I have lived the blessed and creditable life of faith on the Son of God.—Glory be to God, Father, Son and Holy Ghost for all they have done in the contrivance, purchase, and application of redemption!

When he was about 24 years of age, his sense of the Lord's loving kindness to him in so many remarkable deliverances, filled him with much zeal for the glory of God, the truths of the gospel, and the interests of religion. Satan, by suggesting many seemingly pertinent texts of scripture, attempted to take advantage of him, and push him to undertake some things in favours of religion above his station, and so bring a reproach on himself, and on religion. But, by the advice of a friend, and by a sermon of Mr. Kid on Luke xxii. 31, 32. the Lord prevented Satan's designs, and made his readiness to slip, on that occasion, a mean of mortifying his remaining vanity and lightness of spirit; and of leading him to discern the difference between impressions of scripture texts by Satan, and those that are made by the Spirit of God. He lived about forty-eight years after, a most serious and useful Christian; but he did not leave any records of God's dealings with his soul, during that time, that I know of. He died A. D. 1766.

VIII. Life of ALISON MILL.

BEING descended from Episcopal parents, tho' I was restrained from cursing, swearing, and other gross sins, yet I was brought up utterly ignorant of the gospel of Christ. Happening one day to hear Mr. Anderson the Presbyterian minister at Dalkeith, upon spiritual experiences, the whole was as unintelligible to me, as if he had preached in an unknown tongue. But sometime after, being urged by the family in which I then lived, I heard him again upon Rev. iii. 18. "I counsel thee to buy of me gold tried in the fire, that thou mayest be rich," &c. my heart was so touched with his sermon, that I never

I never went back to hear the curate. For some years after, my soul was more and more engaged to Jesus Christ, and I was enabled to give up myself to him without reservation; and I was, as it were, dandled upon the knees of his mercy and love. Nevertheless, I was long subject to heart-breaking jealousies of his love, as often as he withheld his sensible visits.

Having entered into courtship with a man, who had no proper appearance of real godliness, my marriage with whom I put off for two years, on account of my scruples,—N. B. my heart was much drawn off from Jesus Christ, and much oppressed with doubts of the existence of God, notwithstanding the Spirit's application of some passages of scripture to my soul, with some power and life, for my establishment. Moreover, I often fell before temptations to spiritual wickedness. During the five years of my husband's abode with me, I was remarkably deserted by God. If I got any breathings of his Spirit, they were soon followed with fearful frowns. I could neither perceive the particular language of his rods, nor stir up myself to earnest endeavours for deliverance. My conscience was terribly distressed, that my husband would not keep up the morning and evening worship of God in our family; or at most would only sing a psalm, and read a portion of scripture. I had almost fixed my resolution to perform it myself, when he unnaturally ran off from me, leaving me with a young child, in a most destitute condition—*That very night the Lord returned* to my soul, and again began to speak distinctly to me, shewed me the causes of his contending with me, and enabled me to justify him, and condemn myself. I was made particularly to see the carnality of my disposition, which had been manifested in my unnecessary intimacy with carnal persons. My repeated breaches of my resolutions to strive against this evil, much disquieted my spirit. But, at length,
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I was enabled to throw myself on Jesus Christ for assistance ; and he, by the powerful application of that word, " Depart from me, all ye workers of iniquity," Psalm vi. 8. engaged my heart to part with that sin.

Not long after, I fell under law-convictions,—and was greatly distressed on account of my inability to part with the sins of my nature and constitution, But the Lord enabled me to cleave to that word, " Faithful is he that hath promised, who also will do it," Heb. x. 23. 1 Thess. v. 24. Nevertheless, I sometimes fell a questioning of my saving interest in Christ ; and then I could apply to myself none of his words of grace,—and my indwelling lusts raged or prevailed against me. But the Lord, by that word, " This kind goeth not out but by prayer and fasting," Mat. xvii. 21. kept me at duty, and meanwhile shewed me, that my strength lay wholly in himself. After this, I enjoyed so remarkable a manifestation of the Lord's countenance, that for six weeks I was scarcely deserted, half a day ; and when I awaked I was still with God. Meanwhile, he prepared me for new tribulation, by fastening on my mind, in one night, these three scriptures, " Ye have need of patience, that after ye have done the will of God, ye may receive the promises," Heb. x. 36. " If need be ye are in heaviness through manifold temptations," 1 Pet. i. 6. " The God of all grace, after ye have suffered a while, stablish, strengthen and settle you," 1 Pet. v. 10.

The Lord having withdrawn his sensible comforts, Satan terribly tempted me to believe, that my religious experiences were but a mere delusion ; and that the devil had only gone out of me in order to return with more violence, and making my last state worse than my first. Nevertheless, the Lord supported my soul, by suggesting to me, that strong meat was for such as had their senses exercised to discern good and evil, Heb. v. 14. and that Christ's

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"leaves are for the healing of the nations," Rev. xxii. 2.—By enabling me to discern the difference between a delusion of Satan and a work of real grace he confirmed my persuasion of my saving interest in Christ, and backed it with that scripture, "Thou shalt guide me with thy counsel while here, and afterward bring me to glory," Psalm lxxiii. 24. On these providential dispensations I observed, (1.) How readily and suitably the word of God was brought to my mind, for my relief. I was taught of God, and had the scriptures, as it were, written on my heart. (2.) That when I attempted to found my faith upon sensible comforts, I was kept in inward confusion; but when I fixed it upon the unchangeable declarations of God, my darkness was dispelled, and I enjoyed more than ordinary incomes of his love to my soul.

When I began to rejoice in the Holy Ghost's sealing of me up to the day of redemption, I was again tempted to think, That all my former experiences had been delusive. But the Spirit of God suggested to my heart that text, "Ye did run well; who did hinder you, that ye should not obey the truth?" "This persuasion cometh not of him that calleth you," Gal. v. 7, 8. and sometime after that, "Christ is the end of the law for righteousness to every one that believeth," Rom. x. 4. By these I was instructed, that there can be no right performing of duty, but in the strength of Christ; and that I ought never to delay duty, till I got a suitable inward frame, but to approach to God *without money and without price*, resting on Christ himself, who is the hope of his people.—I was distressed in spirit, that I performed religious duties in so sinful a manner, even while I durst not neglect the form of them; and I was afraid to depend on Jesus Christ, as I doubted of my saving interest in him. But he relieved my soul by the powerful application of the following

following scriptures, "He that condemneth himself
 "shall not be condemned with the world," 1 Cor.
 xi. 31, 32. "Knowing that our old man is cruci-
 "fied with Christ, that the body of sin may be de-
 "stroyed," Rom. vi. 6. "He that sanctifieth, and
 "they that are sanctified; are all of one," Heb. ii.
 11. "This is the will of God, even your sanctifica-
 "tion," 1 Thess. iv. 3. And, while I was earnestly
 pleading for a manifestation of himself to my soul,
 that scripture was set before me for my comfort —
 "He that will come, shall come, and will not tarry,"
 Heb. x. 37. And to confirm me more when I came
 to public worship, the text was, "I will not leave
 "you comfortless; I will come unto you," John.
 xiv. 18.

Meanwhile, I could not but observe the season-
 ableness of the Lord's favours, (1.) That very night
 in which my husband ran from me, the Lord re-
 turned to my soul, after about seven years of almost
 constant desertion and frowning,—and made me
 return to my first husband. (2.) Though I was
 left destitute of all the conveniencies of life, in the
 midst of a terrible dearth, and with an infant of a
 few weeks old, the Lord supported my heart with
 these scriptures, "Let all thy wants be on me,"
 Judges xix. 20. "He that spared not his own Son,
 "but delivered him up for us all, shall he not with-
 "him also freely give us all things?" Rom. viii. 32.
 "He giveth meat to them that fear him: he is ever
 "mindful of his covenant," Psalm jii. 5. "My
 "God shall supply all your needs according to his
 "riches in glory by Christ Jesus," Phil. iv. 19.—
 "Riches and honour ate with me; yea, durable
 "riches and righteousness. I cause them that love
 "me to inherit substance; and I will fill all their
 "treasures," Prov. viii. 18, 21. "Who would
 "set the briars and thorns against me, I would go
 "through them together," Isa. xxvii. 4. And
 when I was reduced to great straits, and almost de-
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pairing of relief, the Lord seasonably afforded it from time to time.

When I went to *Newbigging of Musselburgh* to keep a private school for my subsistence, the Jacobinist magistrates persecuted me ; but the Lord suggested to my soul, " Wait on the Lord, and keep " his way ; and he shall exalt thee to inherit the " earth, when the wicked shall be cut off," Psalm xxxvii. 34. Soon after, my principal enemy was removed by a sudden death.—God's dealing with me in public ordinances corresponded with the private exercises of my soul. When I was repining at the hardships of my lot, that scripture was impressed on my mind, " Bless the Lord, O my soul, and forget " not all his benefits ; who forgiveth all thine ini- " quities ; who healeth all thy diseases ; who re- " deemeth thy life from death ; who crowneth thee " with loving-kindness and tender mercies," Psalm ciii. 2,—4.—When my relations abused and robbed me of that which my father left me, the Lord quieted my spirit with these scriptures, " Thou hast " given me the heritage of them that fear thy name," Psal. xi. 5. " If we suffer with him, we shall also reign " with him," Tim. ii. 12. " Forget thy father's " house, and thine own people ; so shall the king " greatly desire thy beauty," Psalm xlv. 11.

While my only child was in perfect health, the Lord warned me of his death, and prepared me for it, by a powerful impression of that text, "When thou passest thro' the waters I will be with thee," &c. Isa. xliii. 2. For a while I perplexed myself, what the impending trouble might be; but my child soon sickened. I found great aversion to part with him, but that word, "He that loveth father or mother, son or daughter, more than me, is not worthy of me," Mat. x. 31. was borne home on my spirit. I was moreover instructed, that my child's sickness was not unto eternal death, but to the glory of God, John xi. 4. I got clearness with respect

to my own interest in Christ: and as my trouble increased, so did my consolation through Christ.—When I was afterward so oppressed in spirit, that I could not groan forth my case to God,—he said to my soul, “Wilt thou not from this time forth cry “unto me, My father, thou art the guide of my “youth,” Jer. iii. 4. I took fast hold of this word, and committed myself and child to him as the Father of mercies and God of all comfort. While he lay in the agonies of death, I was enabled to watch against murmuring or charging God foolishly.—The moment he expired, that word, “If ye be risen with Christ, set your affections on things above, “where Christ is at the right hand of God,” Col. iii. 1. was strongly impressed on my spirit. And never since have I got any rest but in Christ himself. Nay, I could scarcely take the allowed satisfaction in creatures, but when I enjoyed his presence.—Being now rendered destitute of all comfortable relations on earth, I, after twelve years of sad perplexity, got full satisfaction concerning my new covenant interest in Christ. And, O what pleasure I found in conversing with my Christian companions concerning the Lord’s dealing with my soul. And even while I attended the corpse of my child, my heart was ravished with the consolations of Christ, and rejoiced in hope of the resurrection, and of the eternal glory of God.

But, alas! soon after Satan strongly tempted me, that there was no resurrection, no God, no Christ.—After I had exercised myself in manifold groans and wrestlings, Job’s creed, “I know that my Redeemer liveth, and shall stand at the latter day “upon the earth. And, though after my skin, “worms destroy this body, yet in my flesh I shall “see God,” Job xix. 26, 27. was powerfully applied to my heart. My own destitute condition on earth was also like to overwhelm my spirit. But the Spirit of God witnessed to my soul, That the
Lord

Lord, as I have often since experienced, will hear the prayer of the destitute, Psalm cii. 17. that he had made the captain of our salvation perfect thro, suffering, Heb. ii. 10 ; and that I ought to rejoice, that I was made a partaker of the sufferings of Christ. 1 Pet. iv. 13.—On this last text, the minister preached at the first sacramental occasion to which I went. At another communion, particularly on the Lord's day, I was in great depths. My spirit made intercession with groanings which could not be uttered. Next morning I awaked with that word, "The Spirit and the bride say, Come," Rev. xxii. 17.—powerfully impressed on my mind. I hinted to my companion, that I expected to meet with God that day. One of the sermons from that text, "If God be for us, who can be against us," Rom. viii. 31. particularly represented the privileges of the children of God, especially under their afflictions, in exact suitableness to my case. O how my bands were loosed, and I came home triumphing in Christ.

Soon after, I repeated my murmuring at the death of my only child, and fell into new depths. But by an action sermon of Mr. Andrews from that text, "All are yours, and ye are Christ's, and Christ is 'is God's," 1 Cor. iii. 22. I again had my bands loosed, and my soul altogether ravished with the comforts of the Holy Ghost. And yet, at my evening retirement, I could scarce pray a word.—And, O loth, loth was I to go to my bed, without new communion with him whom my soul loveth ! At last, I lay down crying bitterly for the out-pouring of his Spirit.—On the Monday, while I heard a sermon on that subject, O how the Lord opened my heart to attend to the things spoken ; and my hands dropped with sweet smelling myrrh on the handles of the lock ! I was beyond all hesitation persuaded, that Jesus Christ was mine, and I his.—But I had scarcely got home, when, in secret prayer, I could hardly open my lips ; and met with

nothing but hidings and frowns from above. I also fell under new harassments of Satan : but when my foot was slipping, God's mercy held me up. After I had much struggled to oppose his violent suggestions, that all my former comforts had been a mere delusion, I got my hands loosed, and all my objections answered, in a sermon from that text, Hos. ii. 15. " I will give her the valley of Achor for a door " of hope." O how greedily my soul drank in the truth, and I came home rejoicing in God my Saviour ! And, for a long time, I was established in the faith of my interest in him, and of my unfailing perseverance in grace ;—and was no more plagued with murmuring for the death of my child ! And what of the Lord's goodness I enjoyed in private I got confirmed, and, as it were, renewed to me in the public ordinances of the gospel.

Having, after convictions of my folly in such conduct, reflected with some warmth against the defections of the times from our covenanted reformation, the Lord rebuked me by that word, " The wrath " of man worketh not the righteousness of God," James i. 20. and made me see, That though I was called to contend earnestly for the faith once delivered to the saints, yet I was to do it in the spirit of meekness. And the more I felt of the Lord's presence, the more I was afraid to contend against any steps of public defection, till once it had been matter of deep exercise to my own soul before the Lord.—Being now established in the faith of my everlasting interest in Christ, and in God in him, I reviewed my former ways, and observed, That in believing and doubting of my interest, as my frames changed, I had built on my own spiritual sense, not on Jesus Christ the *sure foundation* which God hath laid in Zion ; and that such believing was not the evidence of things not seen, or substance of things hoped for ;—and that in such exercise I sought my own

own comfort rather than the honour of Christ.—I observed, that all my solid relief had come by views of my crucified Redeemer, who spoiled principalities and powers, and made a shew of them openly on the cross, triumphing over them on it;—and that I never enjoyed myself, but in the enjoyment of God;—that I had first hated sin in myself, and then in others;—and that whenever God had intended to grant me relief and comfort, he first in order poured out upon me his Spirit of supplication, to enable me to wrestle with him for it.

For a considerable time after Mr. W—n came to the place, I was little edified by his public ministrations, as they rather related to the exercises of assured saints, than pointed out the method of claiming Jesus Christ upon the footing of the *free grant* of him in the gospel; but afterwards I was much benefited by his ministry. And, tho' I was sometimes offended at some rash steps of his conduct, the Lord's making his sermons sweet to my soul, soon reconciled me to him. Nor, indeed, did I ever enjoy rest in my soul, till I was reconciled to him.—Being disappointed of some outward relief appointed me by my brother, I, after some perplexity, was thereby made to see, That my whole dependence in outward as well as in spiritual and eternal things, behoved to be on God alone;—that the moon of this world must be put under my feet; and that I must not love the world, nor the things of the world, but live by faith on Christ, and glory in my infirmities and necessities, that his power and grace may rest upon me.

On the whole of my experiences I observed, That the love and peace of God ruling in my heart, were the strongest preservatives against sinning;—and that whatever I met with in the enjoyment of familiar fellowship with God, or in victory over Satan, corruptions, or other enemies,—or in supporting me under, or delivering me from troubles, was but
a verifi-

a verification and accomplishment of the words of grace, which he had spoken to my heart.

IX. Life of JAMES MITCHEL, near Irvine.

AFTER I had for several years been a professed seeker of the Lord, and had struggled *not a little* against my own inward corruptions, I happened to travel from Glasgow to Falkirk with Mr. David Dickson. Having taken occasion from the brightness of the day to speak of the glories of heaven, Mr. Dickson, after relating part of his own experiences, proceeded to shew, how men's own righteousness is often *a bar* in the way of their believing the gospel of Christ; and to shew, from the first part of the epistle to the Romans, That only justification through the imputed righteousness of Jesus Christ, can answer our sinful and miserable state by nature; that it is the only way to exclude our boasting, pacify our consciences, and reconcile us to God; fill us with joy in tribulation, promote our true sanctification of nature and life, and make us triumph over the accusations of Satan, and the fears of death, Rom i.—viii.—Oh! how his discourse, especially as I caused him to repeat it, penetrated into my heart, and made me see, that I was altogether naughty, and a vile and miserable sinner before God!—how God therein presented to my soul the offers of his mercy, after all that I had been and done!—and enabled me to believe his word!—and filled me with the most ravishing joy and consolation!—Upon which Mr. Dickson and I halted a little, and solemnly thanked the Lord for his amazing mercy and kindness to me.

Sometimes

Sometimes after, I compared my experiences with the truths of Mr. Dickson's discourse, and found it answerable to them. But Satan soon tempted me to think, that it was all a delusion. Nevertheless, as it arose from no cause in me, and was so answerable to the word of God, I refused to believe him. The Lord also led me to observe, that Satan tempted Jesus Christ to doubt of his Sonship, almost immediately after he had been solemnly attested and declared to be the Son of God by a voice from heaven. He made me also observe, how the hearts of the two disciples burned while Jesus talked with them by the way, and opened to them the scriptures. — Failing in his first assault, Satan next tempted me to an high conceit of myself, on account of the Lord's kindness to my soul. I opened my case to Mr. Dickson. He told me, that I had nothing to boast of in myself, but only in the free and sovereign grace of God in Christ; and that though the Sun of righteousness had shined upon my soul, I was in my self no more than a loathsome dunghill before him; and that whatever I was *as a new creature*, I was it all only as interested in, and united to Christ.

For about two months, I enjoyed the continued smiles of a reconciled God, and my heart was wrapt up to things eternal in the heavens. In hearing a sermon at Irvine, Aug. 16th, 1624, and others at the sacramental occasion, preached from John xii. 27,—32. “Now is my soul troubled, and what shall I say? Father, save me from this hour: but for this cause came I unto this hour.—And if I be lifted up, I will draw all men unto me,” my soul was altogether ravished and drawn up after my ascended Redeemer. But, alas, through a proud conceit of my attainment, I became careless and slothful, and gradually slid back from the Lord, till I was fearfully drowned in the pleasures of sin. By this the intimacy between Christ and my soul was broken

broken up, for more than two years. My predominant lust in a terrible manner carried me captive before it. And, though the Lord allured me with mercies, and threatened me with his judgments, neither availed to stop my wicked inclinations or conduct.

Having, in 1627, applied to Lord Eglinton for a continuance of my farm, I found him so prejudiced against me, that he would enter into no terms of agreement. After he was gone, his Lady took me into her chamber, where we conversed a little about afflictions in general, and mine in particular. I told her, that mine were but the just punishment of my forsaking of the Lord, and taking pleasure in my filthy lusts, after he had dealt so graciously with my soul; and that I hoped, he would, in infinite mercy, make them all work for my good. While I was thus speaking, the Lord gave me such a discovery of his glory and love in the face of Jesus Christ, that my heart was altogether melted and transported with his kindness. I could not refrain my lips from repeated blessing of him for it in her Ladyship's presence. She ran and shut the door; and, on her proposal, we humbled ourselves before him, and solemnly thanked him for his unsearchable mercy toward me. After a little more conversation, we parted joyfully,—she blessing the Lord for making her a witness of his gracious kindness to me.

About a month after, I was one Sabbath oppressed in Spirit, with the thoughts of Lord Eglinton's hatred of me, and fears of his putting me out of my farm. But, that very night, that word, "No affliction is for the present joyous, but grievous: "but afterwards it yieldeth the peaceable fruits of "righteousness," comforted me, and enabled me to check my disquieted heart, and to trust in the Lord, and not fear what man could do to me, since the

the Lord was my helper, and would never leave me nor forsake me.—In this providence I plainly perceived, that I could not bear up myself under the lightest afflictions ; and that even outward difficulties could disquiet me more than I had thought ;—that I had sinned in chiding my wife for her down-castings on the same account, when I ought meekly to have borne with her weakness.—I saw, that the the Lord's sharpening of trials renders the deliverance the more sweet when it comes ;—that I ought always to be preparing for new troubles,—and to be thanking God for his mercies, and improving former experiences as an encouragement to believe that all his promises shall be accomplished, and all my troubles work for my real advantage.—The day after, while I was conversing with Lady Eglinton and two of her Christian friends, and expressing my hopes, that the Lord would provide for me and my family, and make his threatened rods a mean of humbling and sanctifying me, I was again altogether overpowered with the consolations of Christ, and obliged to retire from the company, and pour out my heart before him.

But still I returned with the dog to his vomit, and with the sow that was washed to his wallowing in the mire. By gilding over my predominant lusts with specious pretences, Satan by them deceived and carried me headlong. For a time I endeavoured to resist and mortify them ; but finding that my prayers and other means were not successful against them, I became weary of making opposition, and would have lived whole days without prayer. I began to doubt if there was a God, or any reality of spiritual things. If my conscience was at any time awakened, Satan persuaded me that it was impossible for me to believe the promises of God, or the offers of the gospel ; and kept me from thinking on Jesus Christ and his righteousness ; but held me poring on my own sinfulness and guilt.

T**Having**

Having, to an horrid degree, followed after my idols, notwithstanding all his mercies and threatened judgments sent to reclaim me, the Lord, one night, so thundered his terrors into my soul, as to make me cry and roar to the astonishment of my family and neighbours. Messrs. Bell and Dickson visited me in this affliction: but nothing they could say or do, availed to relieve my soul. My conscience was so oppressed with charges of hypocrisy and other wickedness, that I neither could, nor durst apply a single promise of mercy to myself. After I had continued about three weeks in this sad condition, my mind was somewhat quieted by Mr. Dickson's shewing me, That the Lord permitted sin to remain and rage in his own people, in order to humble them,—manifest his love to them,—and cause their sin promote its own destruction in them:—but my trouble quickly returned upon me.

At last, while I was employed in secret prayer, all Satan's temptations, my own atheism, unbelief, hardness of heart, and wandering of mind vanished like smoke, before the free and sovereign grace of God.—I was quite ravished with the views and impressions of his everlasting love, and spent the remaining part of that day in praising him. Now he shewed me his righteousness in afflicting me; and that there is no deliverance from temptation, but by the powerful operation of his Spirit; and that, in every condition, I ought to live by faith on his promises. I quickly recovered my bodily health; but Satan soon decoyed me into new compliances with my predominant lusts.—For about two months, I, by prayer and otherwise, struggled against him. Such was the agony of my soul, that I could neither rest nor sleep—I got some breathing of relief from time to time.—During my distress, there was scarce a sin to which I was not tempted, and scarce a lust but raged in my heart,—malice, hatred, revenge, uncleanness, unbelief, carnal security, &c. At last, the

the Lord having hedged up my way with thorns, that I could not overtake my lovers,—made me return to my first husband, Hos. ii. 6, 7. and brought me from my fearful pit and miry clay. By this providence, I was taught frequently to renew my solemn acts of repentance ;—taught to walk humbly with God ; and to essay to glorify him by believing his word, notwithstanding all the weakness, wickedness and guilt I found in myself ;—to abound in thanksgiving to him for such mercies ;—to beware of the first beginnings of temptation and backsliding ;—and to pity them that fall into temptation or sin.

In 1628, while I was lamenting the formality of many professed Christians, and the hardness of my own heart, I had my soul delightfully melted and ravished with the Lord's loving-kindness, and was helped to stir up my friend to a more careful seeking of him.——Going to a sermon at a *solemn fast*, my soul was led out to uncommon fervor of desire to hear Jesus Christ himself, and not merely his ambassadors ; and to deep concern for those that had only time-serving hirelings for their ministers. Mr. Dickson, from Jer. ii. 2. preached on *kindness of youth and love of espousals* to Christ, and going after him *in a wilderness* ; and, O ! how my heart was melted with the views of God's redeeming love to me, so vile a sinner ! I could not conceal his favour from those with whom I went home.

The next day, which was also spent in solemn humiliation, I began to reprove one J. G. for his atheism and unbelief under temptations. He stung my soul to the quick, by asking me, *If I could believe myself, or make him believe ?* Taking him home with me, I dealt with him. His account of his case astonished me. But, while I was exhorting him to believe the promises of the gospel, I was seized with an uncommon fit of atheism and unbelief, and altogether disqualified to be useful to the

poor man.—About six months after, as I was conversing with some friends, on our way home from a sermon, the Holy Ghost powerfully touched my heart. O how I was made to lothe myself on account of my sinfulness; and to admire God's redeeming love to my soul!—Having told Mr. Dickson of my late experiences, he warned me to watch against the temptations and delusions of Satan: for, said he, whenever Christ softens a heart and sets his seal on it, Satan labours to set his seal as near to that of Christ as possible.

In 1630, as I was looking at a young Englishman, who was reckoned a *true fearer* of God, my affection to him led me out to such contemplation of Christ's love to sinners, and of the happiness of his people, as filled me with wonder and thankfulness. And, O how my heart glowed with love to the young stranger for his sake!—Apprehending, that a fever was coming on me, I solemnly surrendered myself and family to the Lord; and begged, that he would enable me patiently to bear my approaching trouble; and that my brain might not be disordered by it. He granted my request.—That word, 'Fear' "not little flock; it is the Father's good pleasure "to give you the kingdom," was powerfully applied to my soul; and afforded me the most delightful and ravishing contemplations. My soul was like one on eagle's wings, with ardent desire to possess the kingdom. My weak body could scarce subsist under my inward joys. O the sweet converse I had with the Lady Auchinnames, and with Messrs. Bell and Dickson, while my heart was filled with joys unspeakable and full of glory.

In the following years, I had much affliction on my person, or in my family; and from severals, that attempted to rob me of my property. But the Lord enabled me to cast all my cares upon him, and singularly granted my requests, in carrying me

honour-

honourably through my trouble ; and delivering from them ; and instructed me to observe and improve his diversified providences towards me and my family,

X. Life of JOHN STEVENSON in Carrick.

HEARING Mr. Kennedy, one of the persecuted ministers, lecturing from the 129th psalm, I and my sister, and she that was afterwards my wife, and her brother, were all, in the days of our youth, engaged to the good ways of the Lord. And, notwithstanding manifold tribulations, I have since constantly adhered to the covenanted doctrine, worship, discipline, and government of the church of Scotland.

Not long after, my apprehensions of my own ignorance and want of true Christian experiences, exceedingly distressed me. But, the Lord, by impressing on my mind these words, Prov. ii. 3,—5. “Yea, if thou criest after knowledge, and liftest up thy voice for understanding : if thou seekest her as silver, and searchest for her as for hid treasure, then shalt thou understand the fear of the Lord, and find the knowledge of God.” And Hos. vi. 3. “Then shall we know, if we follow on to know the Lord,”—caused me to hope, that he would teach me his truths, and give me an experimental knowledge of himself.—I was afterwards, for a time, exceedingly oppressed with atheistical injections and thoughts,—so that my bodily strength was not a little impaired,—I concealed my trouble, and charged the suggestions of Satan on myself ; which tended to increase it. But, one day, while I was

was looking on the sea, the Lord manifested his perfections to my soul, in every thing which I beheld;—in a refreshful drink of water which I took;—and in all the piles of grass, and flowers of the field around me.—O the pleasure and joy, and longing after him that I felt, while I beheld him in all his creatures.

A considerable time after, in 1678, I heard Mess. Cunningham and Welsh preach from 2 Cor. v. 2. "We pray you in Christ's stead, Be ye reconciled to God,"—by means of which I was made to see clearly the evil and danger of a state of enmity against God, and the method of reconciliation to him through Christ: and my infinite need of it;—and my whole heart was made cheerfully to accept of Christ on his own terms, in all his offices:—and to give myself to the Lord in a perpetual covenant;—and to take him as given in the promise to be my Lord, and my God.—I solemnly called the heavens and the earth, the sun, and the minister to bear witness, that I had heartily and impartially entered into this everlasting marriage covenant with Jesus Christ.—O how my soul was filled with joy and peace in believing! and what good hope, through grace, I had, that though he had been angry with me, his anger was now turned away, and he was become my salvation! O how I rejoiced in the views of my new relation to God my Saviour! and what ravishing sweetness I felt in my reconciled state! And I resolved humbly to *fear the Lord and his goodness*, who had stooped so low as to pardon such a rebel, and be reconciled to me, after all that I had done.—This solemn transaction with God, and my new covenant relation to him therein avouched, I alway after endeavoured to improve in answerableness to my diversified conditions, temptations, necessities, and distresses.—About the same time, in hearing a sermon of Mr. William Lamb, another persecuted minister, I got such a view of the day.

zling glory and brightness of the divine perfections in the face of Jesus Christ,—and of the work of redemption through his blood, as made my soul so sick of love to him, that I was like to faint under my transporting delights!—This wonderfully confirmed me in the faith, and remarkably prepared me for continuing with Christ in his temptations; and weaned my heart from any inordinate desire after the enjoyments of this world.—In 1686, I had another most delightful and ravishing taste of fellowship with the Father and his Son Jesus Christ; and solemnly renewed my covenant dedication of myself to him.

About this time, my spirits were quite overwhelmed with fears of the Lord's departure from the land, and leaving the rising generation to perish in their sins. I saw that our solemn covenants with God were much disregarded; that all ranks had corrupted their ways; that our Prelatic rulers appeared to bid Christ depart out of our coasts; and that they had murdered or banished his faithful servants, till his people were obliged to wander from mountain to hill, to seek for the pure and honest preaching of the gospel.—But Mr. Renwick, in a sermon chiefly directed to the mourners in Zion, mentioning several grounds of hope, that the Lord would return, one of which was, that the faithful favourites, while dying on scaffolds, or otherwise, had it powerfully borne in on their minds, That the Lord would certainly return to Scotland in a pure and plentiful dispensation of the gospel. This mightily encouraged me; as I was persuaded, that the secret of the Lord was with them that fear him; and that he would not suffer them to be deluded in their dying moments; while they, filled with joy and peace in believing,—had an abundant entrance into his heavenly kingdom ministered unto them;—and would not suffer the expectation of his poor to perish for ever.

Not

Not long after,—though I was convinced that there was sufficient salvation provided in Christ,—and in him alone,—I feared, that I had never got a saving discovery of the way of salvation ; which filled me with great perplexity.—At last, while I was meditating on the works of God, I was led into a clear and affecting view of man's original state of holiness and happiness ; and how he had fallen from it ;—and into such views of the method of salvation through Christ, as so ravished my heart, as to make me solemnly invite all his creatures around me to utter his praise.

But sometime after, Satan violently suggested, that I had got a remarkable sight of Jesus Christ ; but I had never thought, Whether I had any saving interest in him, or not ?—Being directed by the Lord, I was enabled to reply, That a God of infinite mercy and faithfulness would never have caused me to rejoice in his perfections as displayed in the redemption of mankind, if I had not had interest in it.—Satan suggested, that my good frame would quickly be lost. I replied, that as I feared that, I was resolved to cherish the motions of the Spirit, and wait for the God of my salvation.

Falling into some remarkable outward trouble, I besought, that the Lord would graciously deliver me from it ; and vowed, that if he did so, I would return him solemn thanks for his kindness, answerably to Psalm xxii. 22, 23, 24. But, having after my deliverance, fixed on a day for that work, Satan violently suggested, that, as many of my troubles still continued with me, I should delay my solemn thanksgiving till I should be delivered out of them all. But I replied, that, like Israel coming out of a Red sea, and entering into the wilderness, I would spend a day in thanksgiving to my God.—And, in so doing, I found him kind to my soul.

But, soon after, a dreadful cloud of darkness and distress covered my soul for more than two years on

on end. During the first year, I was sensible of the Lord's hidings, but could not be troubled for them to purpose. His arrows stuck fast in me, and the poison thereof drank up my spirit : his hand was heavy upon me. My wounds did stink, and were corrupt ; and even the moisture of my body was turned into the drought of summer. Full of dreadful tossings, in the night I wearied for morning, and in the morning I cried, When will it be night ?—I remembered God and was troubled. I cried out, *Is his mercy clean gone ? Hath the Lord forgotten to be gracious ? Hath he in anger shut up all his tender mercies ?—O that it were with me as in months past, when the candle of the Lord shined upon my tabernacle, and when, by his light, I walked through darkness !*—But, as the Comforter that should relieve my soul was still far from me, my broken bones were never like to rejoice. The hiding of his face for a moment, and weeping enduring for a night, seemed the longest period of my life ; for joy was never like to come in the morning.

In the 2d year of my trouble, my spirits were fearfully distressed by a sense of God's hiding himself. Meanwhile, Satan tempted me to forbear eating my daily bread, as I had not a right to it, and the wrath of God would go down with it. I replied, that, by the law of the land, and the indulgence of providence, I had a right to it ; and was bound to use it for preserving that life which God had given me. Nevertheless, I often durst not eat it, and if I did, Satan violently bore it on my mind, that the wrath of God had gone down with it. By insisting, that my pretending to soul-exercise would be the strongest evidence, that I was an hypocrite, he kept me from revealing it to my Christian friends. He also violently suggested, that God would suddenly destroy me in some wrathful manner in an instant. This so terrified me, that many nights I durst not sleep, lest I should have awaked in hell. I at-

tempted to ease my disquieted soul by strong cries to God, in bewailing my case ; but I durst not bid it *hope in God, for I shall yet praise him, who is the health of my countenance, and my God.*—Providence caused our minister preach a sermon designed for another place—at home, from Psal. xlii. 11. “O my soul, Why art thou cast down ?” &c. I thought he singled me out with his eye ; and the whole sermon corresponded with the several parts of my long, long distress. By this the Lord loosed my bands, and afterward shined more eminently into my soul.

Not very long after, Satan charged home on me my inward plagues, sins and the aggravations of them ; and insisted, that I should judge, How these could consist with any real grace ? With great reluctance, I suspected that all my experiences had been delusions. The agony of my mind threw me into a fever. Satan threatened, that he would either dwell in me for ever, or deprive me of the exercise of my reason. My wife and I wrestled with the Lord to prevent it. My fever was rebuked, and my soul healed all of a sudden.—Some time after, Satan again charged me with my sins, and maintained, that I was nothing but an hypocrite ; and that, if I continued my profession, I would the more increase my eternal misery. But I insisted, that as the Lord had shewed me such kindness, I could not ungratefully turn my back on him, and his easy yoke, and delightful commandments,—but would go on in his strength, making mention of his righteousness. —At our sacramental occasion, he tempted me, that all my plagues and sins were written on my forehead, and that all the people were gazing at them,—which made me sit down and hide my face. —On the Monday after, he accused me of murdering the Son of God in Adam, and by my own transgressions. I confessed the charge ; but replied, that I had fled to the *city of refuge*, as I had done it un-
 aware. And I appealed to God, that it was the
 burden

burden of my heart ; and that Jesus, his Son, was dear to me ; and I flee to his blood and intercession for forgiveness ;—and I begged, that he would rebuke Satan.—My requests were granted. Satan was trodden under my feet ; my absolution from his charges was divinely intimated, and my soul was filled with peace and joy in believing.—But it was not long, when Satan again charged me with my sins and plagues ; and insisted, That it was in vain for me to confess them in hopes of divine forgiveness, unless I could produce scripture marks, that I was one of the people of God. When I replied, that I loved all them that bore God's image. He insisted, that one mark alone was no mark of a real Christian ; which exceedingly perplexed me. After Satan had rejoiced over me about three full weeks, I resolved to keep his secrets no longer. I opened my case to a neighbouring minister, our own being in great distress,—but without any comfort. I had scarcely left him, when Satan upbraided me, as guilty of the basest hypocrisy, in pretending to be in spiritual distress, when I was not ; and that I had not lied to man only, but to the Holy Ghost. This exceedingly perplexed me ; but on the following Sabbath morning, the Lord, by his Spirit, sweetly, clearly and powerfully manifested to me, that I was in covenant with God ; that Christ was precious to me ; that I loved his law, ordinances and people ; that sin was my heaviest burden. Finding this, Satan departed from me for a season, and God filled my soul with joy and peace in believing.

Sometime after, Satan tempted me to believe, that there was no reality in religion, and so I was an arrant fool to trouble myself about it. After earnest prayer for the Lord's direction, I put the following questions to the Tempter, (1.) If there be no reality in religion, how comes it that graceless sinners, in their dying moments, desire to be religious, and to die the death of the righteous ? (2.)

If there be no reality in religion, how comes it, that some very wicked and profane persons have such a remarkable change wrought on them, that they not only turn religious, but continue so thro' a long life, notwithstanding great affliction and persecution on account of religion? (3.) If there be no reality in religion, how comes it, that religious persons get much advantage, both spiritual and temporal, by the same things by which the wicked get much prejudice? (4.) If there be no reality in religion, how is it, that the threatenings of God's word have so frequently such an exact accomplishment? (5.) If there be no reality in religion, how happens it, that religious persons are so encouraged by God in the study of it, and receive so many mercies from him whom they serve; and many of them in answer to their prayers? (6.) If there be no reality in religion, how is it, that God works so many wonders for the credit and vindication of religion, and religious persons?—The Lord rebuked Satan; and never since suffered him to molest me as he had done.

For many years, I spent a day, once a month, in solemn fasting and supplication, and, if I was not admitted into familiar fellowship with the Lord on it, I sometimes spent a second, or third in the same manner. And, many were the remarkable answers of prayer which I received. The furious persecution of the Prelatists having forced me and many others to rise in arms for our own defence at Bothwell; when I observed others providing *head-pieces* and *breast plates* for themselves, I, having no money to purchase such defences, cried to God, and solemnly took him to be the covering of my head in the day of battle. After our forces were routed, I, though in the utmost danger, was preserved unhurt, while such as had provided defences, were murdered by our pursuers on every hand of me. During the

nine following years, the furious dragoons were on several occasions at my very hand ; and yet I was always marvellously preserved from them, and never apprehended.

Being one day travelling by an unknown road to visit my wife, who was nursing a child to Craigdarroch, a thick mist covered the country, and I and my guide wandered out of the way. Being impressed, that it was so, I applied to the Lord for direction. In prayer, I was led out to wrestle with him in favours of Christ's church, and persecuted cause and people, and intirely forgot to pray for the removal of the mist, or direction in the way. Nevertheless, before I had done, the mist was carried off, and we saw how we had wandered, and were directed into the right way. About sixteen months after, when I came to the same hill, as I was carrying my child to its mother at Craigdarroch, there fell a dreadful rain ; and the child fell a weeping, till she was like to burst. I applied to prayer, and had scarce begun, when the babe gave over weeping ; and having ended, the rain continued pouring down on every side ; but where we were, and as we went on, not one drop fell on our way, about the breadth of an ordinary avenue. Soon after, while I was hiding myself in Craigdarroch's house, unknown to him, my shoes being worn out by my walking in the night, I, in prayer, begged, that the Lord would provide me shoes, in a way that would neither endanger me nor the family, that was so kind to me. God, at that very time, stirred my brother in law, who was thirty miles distant, and knew nothing of my need of them, to buy me a pair of shoes, and send them to my wife by a sure hand, which he just then found coming to the country.

About this time, the child that my wife was nursing, fell dangerously sick. I went out in the night season, and cried earnestly to the Lord for the preservation of his natural life. Satan terribly molested me,

me, which made me apprehend, I had provoked the Lord in that duty. Finding, that for the sake of our own temporal accommodation in the family, I had too peremptorily insisted for the preservation of the child's natural life,—I returned to prayer, and was wonderfully enlarged in praying for his eternal salvation. I had scarcely ended my supplications, when he was perfectly, and all of a sudden, recovered from his fever, and continues still alive.—Being obliged by the rage of the persecutors, to rise in the midst of a violent fever, and travel twenty miles on foot to *Castle-Stewart*, where my wife staid, I was there laid in a closet above the laird's room, who behoved to know nothing of my being there. My sickness was so great, that I could not forbear moaning; and yet my moaning exposed both me and my family to danger. I cried to the Lord to restrain it; and he immediately granted my request.

I had many other remarkable answers of prayer, in the Lord's directing me in worldly business, for which I was naturally unfit; and especially in marvellous deliverances, granted to myself or friends, in great trouble of body or mind. And sometimes by impressions of future or far distant troubles, I was stirred up to wrestle with God for support under, and deliverance from trouble before it happened, or before I knew the condition of my distant friends. Under the most dangerous troubles, I was helped to much submission and patience; and to rejoice over my most loathsome and incurable-like sores, as marks of God's distinguished favour and regard to me.

On account of their neglect to renew our covenants with God, and their not censuring those who had been guilty of fearful defection during the preceding period, &c. I had great difficulty about joining the Revolution church. But, having set apart a day for asking counsel of the Lord; and upon considering,

ing, that some reformations in the Jewish church came to a lesser degree of perfection than others, without any separation of the godly ; and that Jesus Christ, and several eminent believers, along with him, joined in communion with the Jewish church, notwithstanding several corruptions,—I perceived it my duty to join the established church ; and have found much spiritual comfort and edification in so doing.

He was a most judicious, devout, and exemplary Christian. He lived a life of prayer, meditation, and holiness. His meekness, modesty, and sympathy, shined in every relation or condition in which providence placed him. He was an affectionate husband, dutiful parent, kind neighbour, and faithful friend. After relating to his children what delightful views he had enjoyed in considering the evidences of Christ's Messiahship, he left it as his dying charge to them, (1.) To set apart some time every day for reading God's word in a careful dependence on him to make it useful to their souls. (2.) To labour to have an affecting knowledge of their lost estate by nature. (3.) To flee to, and receive Jesus Christ, in all his offices, as their only and all-sufficient Saviour. (4.) To study earnestly to live by faith in every respect, and condition. (5.) Always to choose affliction and suffering rather than sin. (6.) To labour much in fervent prayers to God. (7.) Carefully to guard against rashly concluding themselves graceless on account of divine hidings, inward downcasting and disquiet, or rage of indwelling corruptions. (8.) To be much given to a serious consideration of their latter end. (9.) To labour to perfect holiness in all manner of conversation, as a thing without which no man shall see the Lord.

XI. Life of Mr. JAMES BARRY in Ireland.

MANY and great were the deliverances which the Lord wrought for me, respecting outward concerns.

(1.) Being, about the time of the Irish massacre, cast out into a dunghill by my Popish nurse, in the midst of a storm of snow, I lay there moaning and crying in the most piteous and lamentable manner, about five hours. A servant of my father, being turned out of his proper way, and hearing my voice, looked for me, and found me out among the snow, and wrapping me in his cloak carried me to my parents, while I, all the way of about 15 miles, shrieked in the most lamentable manner. The cold and long want of food threw me into such distress, as rendered the assistance of the most skilful physicians in Ireland altogether unprofitable to me. At last, being, for a time, apparently dead, I was nailed up in my coffin : but, as they were carrying me to my grave, I was heard crying in the coffin ; which so affrighted some of my friends, that they ran off.—Not long after, I was again wrapt up in my winding sheet, but, as some watched my corpse, I, to their astonishment, lifted up the sheet.

(2.) Notwithstanding these deliverances, my body through the force of my distemper swelled into a monstrous form, my belly being as big as an ordinary tub or drum, while my slender legs were incapable to bear the weight of it. Being one day in the arms of a servant, I manifested my inclination to have some speckled nails, which dropt out of a load of furze ; and having played with them for a time,

time, I made signs to have them put into the fire. After they had lain sometime there till they were roasted, I made signs to have them out again; and having gotten them, I cleared off the shells and ate them;—and for sometime after would scarce eat any thing but snails. To the astonishment of all around, this strange diet recovered me to perfect health.

(3.) My nurse having afterward left a candle unextinguished while she went to bed,—while she and I lay fast asleep, our bed cloaths took fire. My father awakening, perceived the smell of burning, and ran from chamber to chamber, till he came where we were, and by his means both she and I were carried out unhurt, and without alarming my mother who was then big with child.

(4.) Not long after, as I was reaching out my hand to the Caterer of our family for some meat, our mastiff flew upon me and took my whole head into his mouth. None could call him off till the cook was brought; and then he left me weltering in my blood, with my face dreadfully mangled, and it was feared my eyes had been digged out. But God had preserved them unhurt.

(5.) Being with my aunt in a park, I, in my rambling, lay down at the brink of the horse pool; and reaching my hand into it to catch some animals like horse hairs, I fell into it with my head downwards.—My aunt, missing me, came at last to the pool when I was almost out of her reach; and catching hold of one of my legs, drew me out. But, for a time, she could perceive no breath in me.

(6.) One of our grey hounds attacking a pig in the field, the whole herd of swine, about eighty, surrounded him. While I, without any success, laboured to call him off the pig, the great boar fell on me, threw me down between two furrows: and rending my cloaths, prepared to tear out my bowels. The hound immediately let go the pig, and
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fell on the boar, which made him let go his hold of me, that I might run for my life.

(7.-8.) By a furious horse running off with me through a river, and dragging me a considerable way by my foot in the stirrup, with my head on the ground; and another furiously throwing me off his bare back, notwithstanding all my efforts,—and then striking at my forehead, my life was in the uttermost danger, but still preserved.

(9) One Grundy having been put from his factorship by Alderman Preston, on account of dishonesty, I was put in his place, and, much against my will, obliged by my master to seize on some of his furniture. In malicious revenge, Grundy pretended, that I had broken up his cabinet, and taken out £3-15-0 for myself; and procured two Popish witnesses to swear against me. He applied to four different Justices of peace: but none of them would grant a Warrant against me. He then prepared to arraign me before my own uncle, Lord Chief Justice of Ireland, who now hated me on account of my having turned a dissenter. This prosecution threw me into fearful perplexity, not so much on account of my own life, as on account of the reproach that religion was like to suffer. But, before he had opportunity to present his indictment, Grundy had his conscience filled with such terrible horror and anguish, that, after repeated attempts to murder himself, he expired in the most dreadful distraction and madness.

God's providence relative to my spiritual concerns was no less remarkable.—When about the 15th year of my life, I was playing with some Papists on the Lord's day, all of a sudden it was darted into my mind, that I must either be converted or damned in hell. Being brought up ignorant of the principles of the Christian religion, I took this hint to mean no more than that I behoved to leave off playing on the Sabbath, and other immoralities, in order

der to escape the damnation of hell,—which I apprehended to be some very ugly and terrible thing.—I gave up with my wicked companions, and my beloved sinful diversions; and, with all the seriousness of which I was capable, applied myself to read the Bible, Practice of Piety, book of common prayer, and especially Baxter's *Call to the unconverted*. I resolved not only to read prayers every day, but to fast every Wednesday and Friday.—I read, prayed, and fasted, till my body was reduced, and rendered unfit for service. Notwithstanding manifold temptations from Satan and my former companions, and strong inclinations of my own heart, I persevered in this manner of life, about six or seven years, in order to secure myself from hell and damnation. I became the talk of the country, especially of my relations, as a wonderful practiser of piety. This, notwithstanding my high conceit of the certainty and eminency of my conversion, I disliked to hear of.

—My uncommon zeal for the church, and veneration for her liturgy, ceremonies, clergy, and especially her Prelacy, made my friends expect, that I would become an extraordinary ornament to her.

But, about A. D. 1664, and the 22d year of my age, in the time of the sermon on *Easter Munday*, it was darted into my mind, that I had, on the preceding day, received the Lord's supper unworthily, —along with that word, *He that eateth and drinketh unworthily, eateth and drinketh damnation to himself*;

1 Cor. xi. 29. My soul was hereon filled with the most dreadful consternation. I imagined that multitudes of devils were every where ready to drag me into eternal flames. Getting home, I attempted to pray, but neither could nor durst. My uncle, Lord Chief Justice, by comfortable texts of scripture, and other considerations, laboured to relieve my tormented soul; but in vain. I applied to seven or eight of our most famous clergymen, one of them a bishop: but finding that they did not understand

my case, and ministred but carnal and unprofitable directions, I abandoned myself to despair.—Both day and night, my soul was racked with apprehensions of my sins, and of the eternal damnation annexed to them. I durst scarcely sleep,—and if I slumbered, my dreams turned on devils and damnation, and my being among them. All the end that I proposed in my continued abstinence from sin or earnest attendance on duties, was but to render my torments in hell the more tolerable.—Meanwhile, Satan violently tempted me, that the scriptures were nothing but a political invention of men. But finding, that their awakening and convincing power on my conscience, effectually refuted these suggestions,—he tempted me, that there was no God. My attentive observation of the works of God, all around me, as necessarily produced by him, fully persuading me of his real existence, Satan injected into my mind the most base, horrid, and monstrous representations and thoughts of God.

When I had continued under these terrible inward troubles about four years, till my body was reduced to a skeleton, and rendered ghastly, and its several sensations remarkably weakened, and while I was in the very depth of consternation and horror, that text, Isa. xliii. 25. *I, even I, am he that blotteth out thy transgressions for mine own sake, and will not remember thy sins,* was one morning darted into my mind, and took such hold of it, that though formerly I could scarcely think of any but terrible texts relative to hell and damnation, falling away, and sinning against the Holy Ghost, or the like, I could this day scarcely think of any but this and like comfortable ones.—At night, I retired by myself, under terrible impressions of Satan's presence with me, and readiness to shew himself in a visible shape. But, while I was examining myself concerning my behaviour through the day, the eyes of my under-

standing were opened, and enlightened to understand that scripture which had rolled in my mind all the day; and I thought none could be more answerable to my case.—I was made to perceive, that all the legal methods which I had used for my own relief, were directly contrary to God's method of saving sinners revealed in the gospel; and so it was no wonder that the more works I performed, I found myself the farther from all true peace and comfort. I was made to understand God's covenant of free grace in Christ; and to see that my proper work was to *believe on the Son of God*, in whom alone that righteousness is to be found, which reconciles a sinner to an offended God. In order to engage my heart to this covenant and method of salvation, the Holy Ghost, through the gospel, discovered to me *WHO* and *WHAT* Jesus Christ is; and for what end his Father had sent him;—that he was an almighty and all-sufficient Saviour of sinful men; and the righteousness of his obedience and suffering the only and all sufficient ground of their pardon and acceptance with God;—that God, whom I had so exceedingly offended, was truly and earnestly desirous, that I should be reconciled to him, and made acceptable in his sight, through the mediation of his Son;—that, in the covenant of grace, there is provided every thing necessary to compleat the eternal happiness of such as believe on Christ.—Along herewith, he made me see and acknowledge, that by my sin I had destroyed my soul, and that God might justly glorify himself in my eternal damnation;—and made me cheerfully willing to receive Jesus Christ, as offered to me in the gospel, as my only and compleat Saviour; and, renouncing my own righteousness and strength, to accept of him, in his person, offices, relations, righteousness, and fulness,—and even in his cross.

By these influences and deliverances, my soul was altogether filled with the most ravishing and transporting

porting joy and wonder. Nevertheless, calling to remembrance what a deceitful enemy Satan is; and how far he can ape the Spirit of God in the production of flashes of joy in awakened sinners,—I began to fear, that all I had met with, might perhaps be delusive. But the Holy Ghost, by his elucidating and heart searching power, enabled me to perceive the answerableness of the change, which I had experienced, to the standard of his word. And, by his enlightening influence, I was fully persuaded, That God had elected me to everlasting life; that all my sins had been imputed to, and perfectly satisfied for, by Jesus Christ, as my surety; that God, being fully satisfied with the surety-obedience and suffering of Christ, took pleasure to pardon and accept elect men on account of it; that all my sins were fully and freely forgiven, only on account of that which Christ had done and suffered for me; that God had loved me from all eternity, and had dealt roughly with me, in order to make me the more fully understand the dreadful nature of sin, and prepare me for receiving the more delightful manifestation of his love; that I was now in a justified, sanctified, and adopted state, and should certainly persevere therein; that notwithstanding all the tribulations I should meet with in the world, the providence of God should support, protect and carry me through,—and all my remaining corruptions, troubles, and even death, should work for my eternal advantage. These views filled me again with the most delightful and heart-melting joy and comfort. The horror and guilt of my conscience,—the vail which hindered me to perceive the mysteries of the gospel,—and the distracting storms of fear and despair,—were succeeded by a delightful approbation of conscience, pleasant views of divine things, sweet calms of inward peace, and well-grounded hopes,—a spirit of love, power, and of a sound mind, and an holy and humble joy in, and
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boldness toward God. My very dreams turned on the grace and glory of the divine persons, and on the heavenly felicity : and between my sleeps in the night, I used to rise, and solemnly thank the Lord for his mercies to me.

Not only did all the earthly honour and grandeur of my relations appear contemptible to me : but even the liturgy and ceremonies of our Episcopalian church appeared destitute of divine appointment, and unsuitable to the pure and spiritual nature of God, or to the taste of awakened and renewed souls. I perceived, that no worship, but that which is of God's own appointment, can be acceptable to him, or truly nourishing to hungry souls. I therefore left off joining in the public worship of the established church, and attended the ministry of Mr. Samuel Mather, a dissenter. My uncle, my parents, and other relations, did all they could, by reasoning, by fawning kindness, and by angry threatenings, to make me give up with the dissenters, and return to their established church. But, when they found that I was determined to prefer the honour of Christ, and the inward peace of my conscience, to every thing earthly, they all abandoned me as an *obstinate fanatick*, who had *disgraced* their family.

After he had experienced manifold trials and deliverances, he became a dissenting minister, highly respected by the distinguished friends of the pure gospel of Christ.

XII. Life of MARION SHAW.

DURING my youth, the Lord, by sending me to attend my father's cattle and the like, gave me an opportunity of learning my Catechism, and becoming acquainted with my Bible, while himself inclined my heart that way. About the 20th year of my life, 1720, my sisters being all married, I expected more ease and freedom in my father's family, and was puffed up with hopes and prospects of earthly enjoyments. But at a sacramental occasion at Moring-side, the Lord, by these two texts, Rev. iii. 20. 2 Cor. v. 20. opened my heart to receive himself; and he came in and supped with poor worthless me. Satan and my own deceitful heart mustered up many objections against my receiving him; as, that it was too soon for me to be religious, and better never to have a profession of religion, than to be an apostate.—Resolving to partake of the Lord's supper at the communion of Kilsyth, I laboured to prepare for that work: notwithstanding several external discouragements, I joined myself to the Lord; and had pleasant fellowship with him in his ordinances on Sabbath, and in the thanksgiving work.—Next year, all the days of the solemnity in that place were remarkably useful for the conviction, encouragement and direction of my soul, particularly the sermons by Mr Telfer from Hos. x. 12. and from 2 Cor. ix. 15. Mr. Robe's action-sermon from Isa. xxv. 9. and Mr. Alex. Moncrief on Gen. xxiv. 58. with Isa. liii. 3.—That text Hos. ii. 6. 7. and many others, which I heard at different times at that place, were very refreshing to my soul.—In 1722, I enjoyed remarkable smiles of the Lord's countenance, at a sacramental occasion at Slamanan, particularly

ticularly the sermons of Mr. Brown from 1 John i. 7. Mr. Anderson from Isa. xxv. 26. and Mr. Bonner from John xvii. 11.

After I had, for a considerable time, cheerfully run on in the Lord's day, Satan and my own wicked heart strongly tempted me to give up with going to so many communions, and to attend the foolish diversions to which my neighbours were addicted. But by some rousing scriptures, as 2 Pet. ii. 10,—22. and Heb. x. 26, 27. Psalm lxxxii. 11. the Lord warned and preserved me; and by others, as Psal. lxii. 5. Isa. viii. 17. and l. 10. directing me to wait on and trust in him, he renewed and strengthened my languishing soul. Till the 24th year of my life, I had generally enjoyed outward health. But after that, I was for several years in a languishing condition. The Lord meanwhile supported me by his word, Mal. iv. 2. and others of that import. At the sacramental and other occasions of Monkland, where I long resided, I was often delightfully refreshed by the ordinances of Christ.—But at last, in 1732, Mr. Wiseman died, and Mr. C. was placed in his stead, under whose ministrations I could reap nothing of my wonted spiritual edification. I therefore, after much tossing, left off attending him, and went to hear Mr. Wardrop of Whitburn, of whose ministrations I had heard a most savoury account. For five years, I had my soul refreshed from time to time under them; and meanwhile had also remarkable fellowship with the Lord at the sacramental occasions of Dunfermline, Queensferry, Torphichen, Orwel, Abernethy and Kinclaven. Some discourses by Mr. Hamilton of Stirling on Psal. xvi. 8. and of Ebenezer Erskine from John ix. and xi. 11. Isa. liv. 13. were also of great use to me. I had also many promises respecting my own health and the welfare of the church, as Psal. cxviii. 13. Job xxxiii. 16,—30. Jer. xxx. and xxxiii. 6. suggested and powerfully applied to my soul.—I had also my

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own share of temptations to neglect the means of grace which were most useful to me, and to look out the providences of God as contradicting his promises. But I was enabled to wait with patience, till I enjoyed their accomplishment.

The attempt of the Popish pretender to overturn our religion and liberties, and the errors and divisions which fearfully prevailed in the church of Christ, lay very heavy on my heart; and Satan and my own unbelief exerted themselves to overwhelm me with sadness and discouragement. But the Lord enabled me to plead with him to bring me off from all lying refuges,—and to place all my confidence in himself alone;—and by various methods granted my requests.—*Boston's crook of the lot*, *Hutcheson on the lesser prophets*, and *Bell's grapes in the wilderness*, on *Hos. ii. 14.*—as also some discourses by Messrs. W. Moncrief, J. Hough, and other ministers, were remarkably useful to me in my wilderness trials, or in promoting my relief. The promises made to the overcomers, *Rev. ii. 7, 11, 17, 26.* and *iii. 5, 12, 21.* and *xxi. 7.* were often very encouraging to me.

After a life of manifold afflictions;—of receiving and resting on Christ;—of studying to have familiar fellowship with him;—and of earnest concern for his declarative glory in the world, and to have her relations and others brought to him, and built up on him;—and of longing for the immediate enjoyment of him, she died in 1764.

CASUISTICAL

CASUISTICAL HINTS

RELATIVE TO

SATAN'S TEMPTATIONS,—INDWELLING
SIN,—SPIRITUAL EXPERIENCE,—CHRIS-
TIAN CONVERSATION,—AND SCANDA-
LOUS OFFENCES.

By J. BROWN.

CASUISTICAL HINTS, &c.

C H A P. I.

Of Satan's TEMPTATIONS,—in enticing men to commit sin,—hindering or vitiating their religious duties,—leading them into errors,—distressing their spirits.—GENERAL REMEDIES.

WHEN God is said to *tempt* men, or men to *tempt* God, in the Old Testament, the Hebrew word *NISSAH* properly signifies to *put them to the trial*, Gen. xxii. 1. Deut. iv. 34. and vii. 19. and xxix. 3. and vi. 16. But, in the New Testament, *TEMPTATION* frequently denotes Satan and his instruments *enticement of men into sinfulness and misery*, Mat. iv. 1. 1 Cor. vii. 5. 1 Tim. vi. 9. James i. 13. 14.

Satan is a *Tempter*, (1.) **MOST MALICIOUS.** He prays for opportunities of tempting men, Luke xxii. 31. He is content to tempt in smaller matters, when he is resisted in greater. He tempts, when he knows that he cannot succeed, Mat. iv. 1,—11. John xiv. 30. He tempts men to sin, while himself is tormented for sinning, and while he knows, that his temptations will bring further punishment on him, 2 Pet. ii. 4. He tempts to the most malicious inclinations and practices, John viii. 14. Rev. ii. 10. 1 John iii. 12. (2.) **MOST SKILFUL.** He retains his

his angelical nature and knowledge, Jude 6. 2 Sam. xiv. 17. He hath now acquired much experimental knowledge by his long continued practice of tempting, John viii. 44, Rev. x. 2. and xii. 9. Though he cannot immediately and infallibly discern men's inward dispositions and thoughts, yet, by an accurate observation of their passions, actions, confessions and supplications, he can shrewdly guess at them, Jer. xvii. 9, 10, Rev. ii. 23, Job i. 7. and ii. 3. Though he hath not any natural or immediate knowledge of future events, yet, by revelations from God,—by thorough consideration of the causes of events,—by pondering scripture predictions,—and by prying into the counsels of men, he can form such probable conjectures concerning them, as are seldom disappointed, 1 Kings xxii. 20,—22. 1 Sam. xxviii. 19.—By his extensive knowledge, he accurately discerns, what temptations are most likely to prevail with such particular persons; and in what time or circumstances it is most proper to apply them; and by what instruments, means, motives and arguments, he bids fairest to seduce men most effectually and ruinously. (3.) **MOST POWERFUL.** He produceth most wonderful effects, 2 Thess. ii. 10, 11. He can assume an aerial body in most diversified and most dreadful forms. His operations on his familiars, and on such as are possessed by him, are marvellous and terrible, Mat. xiv. 26. 1 Sam. xxviii. Deut. xviii. 10. Mark v. 3, 4. and ix. 18, 20, 22. He terribly oppresseth the spirits of such as fall under his power, 1 Sam. vi. 14. 2 Cor. xii. 7. 1 Pet. v. 8. (4.) **MOST ACTIVE AND DILIGENT.** He tempts multitudes of men by multitudes of means, motives and instruments, and to multitudes of crimes, Rev. xii. 9 and xx. 8. He tempts on every proper occasion, and pursues every advantage which he obtains, to the utmost. He tempts most earnestly and furiously, when men are like to be taken out of his power by conversion, death, &c.

1 Pet.

1 Pet. v. 8. Job i. 8. Luke ix. 42. Rev. xii. 12.—

(5.) **MOST CRUEL.** He most furiously oppresseth men who have wounded spirits, and with such temptations as tend most grievously to afflict or defile them, Eph. vi. 12, 16. 2 Cor. xii. 7. He pusheth men to the most vile or dangerous crimes, Job. i. 8. and ii. 3, 9. Acts v. 3. John xiii. 26, 27. 2 Thess. ii. 9, 10. He forcibly obtrudes his most loathsome and horrid temptations upon the most holy children of God, Mat. iv. 1,—11. 2 Cor. xii. 7. He is most ready to assault them when they are called to difficult duties ; or when their spirits are distressed ; or when they have, or ought to enjoy the most remarkable manifestations of God's love, Psalm lxxiii. 1,—28. Heb. ii. 15. 2 Cor. xii. 7. He inflicts horrible distempers upon men's persons or property ; and stirs up cruel persecution against every thing really good, Job i ; ii. Rev. ii. 10 and xii. 7, 10, 12. and xx. 8, 10. He makes men fearfully to oppress and murder one another in war, slavery, &c. and even to murder themselves ; and make parents or others murder innocent babes, to conceal guilt, or in rage, or even in pretended sacrifices to God, Jer. xlvi,—lii. Psalm cvi. 37, 38. He torments or retains in wretchedness many of his most obedient servants.

(6.) **MOST CRAFTY.** He cunningly seduced our first parents into the most aggravated and ruinous sin, when they were but newly made after the image of God, and stood high in his favour, Gen. iii.—He hath seduced many of the choicest saints into the most abominable crimes, and which were most contrary to their predominant graces, Gen. ix. 21. and xii. 13 and xix. 30,—36. and xxvi. 7. Exod. xxxii. 2,—4. Num xx. 10,—12. 2 Sam. xi ; xii. 1 Kings xi. 1,—7. and xix. 3, 4. 2 Chron. xvi. and xxxi. 25. Psal. lxxiii. 1,—16. and lxxvii. 7,—9. Jer. xii. 1. and xx. 7, 14,—18. He entangles men in his temptations before they are aware, 2 Sam. xi ; xii. Matth. xvi. 22. and xxvi. 69,—74. He frames
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his temptations, so as to be extremely deceiving, 2 Cor. ii. 11. Eph. vi. 11.

II. Answerably to these dreadful properties, Satan acts as a Tempter, *in enticing men to commit sinful acts ;—in hindering or vitiating their religious duties :—in seducing their mind into erroneous opinions :—and in distressing and wounding their spirits,*

In tempting men to COMMIT SINFUL ACTIONS, Satan (1.) Carefully acquaints himself with their state, temper, station, companions, and other circumstances, that he may frame his temptations, answerable to each, Job i. 8. and ii. 3. (2.) He provides temptations, which are exactly suited to these diversified circumstances, 2 Cor. ii. 11. Gen. iii. 1,—9. and xix. 30,—36. 2 Sam. xi ; xii. 1 Kings xi. 1,—7. Sometimes indeed he tempts men to that which is most contrary to their natural inclination : but that is only when God restrains his other temptations ; or, when his principal design is to harass and torment them ; or, when their temper alters under temptation ; or, when he intends to keep them gazing at one temptation, in order that they may be ensnared and corrupted by another. (3.) He proposeth his temptations in the manner which is best calculated to succeed. He brings men to the object of the temptation, or it to them, that it may, as it were, speak and plead for him. He employs friends, relations, or persons of great piety, knowledge, eloquence, or some other real or fancied excellency, as his subordinate agents. Or, he secretly suggests the temptation into men's fancy and mind ; earnestly urgeth his motives of compliance ; stirs up their fancy to gaze on the object or temptation ; and their biased mind to consider how, or how far, it may be consented to, Gen. iii. 1,—9. 2 Sam. xi. Acts v. 3. 2 Chron. xxi. 1. (4.) He stirs up their inward lusts to entertain the temptation. In order to this, he vassallheth the object

ject of these lusts with apparent excellencies. He conceals the sinfulness or danger of compliance. He imposeth on their senses. He lays hold on every opportunity of committing the sin; and then especially urgeth to it. He impresseth the sin on their fancy as pleasant, profitable, or honourable, or, at worst, no great matter. He decoys them into an intimacy with bad companions that thereby their conscience may be stupified and defiled, or the image of these companions enstamped on them. By making men confident of their own sufficiency of grace, wisdom, or strength, to oppose the temptation, he renders them secure. He entangles their affections in a passionate working towards the object of the temptation, that they may be thereby hurried on to a full and speedy compliance. And sometimes he, by their drunkenness, trouble, or the like, disposeth their body to be a promoter of his temptations, Acts v. 3. Josh. vii. 21. 2 Sam. xi. Job i; ii. Jer. xx. 7,—18. Psal. lxxiii; lxxvii.

By thus procuring entertainment to his temptations, Satan **BLINDS MEN'S MIND**, that they cannot rightly judge of, or oppose them. Hence men of the largest understanding, at the expence of the most dreadful disgrace and danger, temporal or eternal, commit the most absurd things, and even glory in their shame. Nay, good men trample on that spiritual light, life, and comfort which they have received from God, Mat. xxvi; xxvii. Rom. i. 18,—32. Job iii. 1 Kings xi. 1,—7. 2 Sam. xi; xii.

IN BLINDING MEN'S MIND, Satan (1.) *Hinders their exercising their reason* in opposition to his temptations. For this purpose, he secretly, indirectly, and amidst their confusion of thought, throws his suggestions into their mind. He suddenly surpriseth them with his assaults; or, he insensibly, and by slow degrees, introduceth his temptation, Acts v. 3. Mat. xxvi. 2 Sam. xi; xii. (2.) *He perverts their*

their reason into at least a connivance with his temptation. For this end, he represents doubtful actions in the best, or in the worst light they can bear, and gives them false names. He makes other men render the opposite courses odious, through their imprudent management of them. He entangles men in false opinions, and makes them imagine, that their ends in them are truly laudable and excellent. He makes them call evil good, and good evil, Jude 4. Luke ix. 55. He represents the sin to which they are tempted, as, at worst, but small and easily forgiven;—as a thing extremely calculated to promote some real advantage, honour, pleasure, or profit;—or even necessary, in respect of their temper, and circumstances, or to prevent temptations to that which is much worse;—as a sin of which the greatest saints have been guilty, and of which the whole danger may be prevented by a little faith and repentance, Prov. vii. 16. 1 Sam. xxv. 21. Gen. xix. 30,—36. Mat. xiv. 3.—11. and xxvi. 69,—74.

(3.) *He disturbs their exercising of their reason* in opposition to his temptations. For this effect, he, with much vehemence and perseverance, exhibits the profits and pleasures of these sins to which he tempts. He flatters men, that they are in no danger of falling into them. He withdraws the temptation which they seem bent to resist, and plies them with another. He pretends to tempt to no more than some innocent approaches towards such sins, as he really intends should be committed; and which will at once gratify their curiosity, or other inclination, and mark them social, chearful, or the like. He suggests sophistical distinctions, by which the thing tempted to, may be explained away into no sin at all.—By these and the like artifices, he induceth men,—*first*, to resist his temptations, in a careless, faint, wavering, or, even reluctant manner,—*then*, to lay aside all such thoughts as are calculated to render the thing tempted to odious; and *in fine*, to

hold the truth in unrighteousness, and inwardly plead in favours of the temptation, Rom. i. 18. 2 Pet. iii. 5. (4.) He *distracts men's mind*, that it cannot oppose his temptations. To effect this, he, with clamorous, constant, and lasting vigilance and vehemence, carries on his temptations. He tempts in many different forms, or to many different sins at once. By means of trouble, he renders their mind unweildy, confused, dispirited, or fretful, 1 Pet. v. 8. Eph. vi. 16. 2 Cor. xii. 7. Job i; ii; iii. Psal. lxxiii. 1.—6. and lxxvii. 7.—10. (5.) He, with great violence, pusheth men headlong into sin. For this purpose, he vehemently suggests to their mind, That they cannot possibly hold out against, or overcome his temptations, and therefore had better comply without delay; or, that they have in part complied already, and therefore must compleat their deed. He violently solicits their compliance, and stirs up their passions, which conduce towards it. He makes them trample on convictions, and fills their mind with hard, horrid, and atheistical thoughts of God, Psalm lxxvii. 7.—9. and lxxiii. 13. and l. 17.—21. Jer. xx. 17. and xv. 18. (6.) To *prevent men's conscience from awakening, and perceiving, and warning them against his temptations*, he persuades them, that that to which he excites them is really necessary,—at least, in their circumstances. To persuade them of this necessity, he feigns a necessity where there is no appearance of it. He overstretcheth the necessity of something lawful in itself, with which he connects that to which he tempts, and thus makes them entangle themselves in a seeming necessity of sinning, 1 Sam. xiii. 8.—12. Matth. xiv. 1.—9.—The heart being hardened by an apprehended necessity of sinning, is prepared to commit the most presumptuous wickedness.—Moreover, by first tempting men to commit lesser sins, which less startle their conscience, Satan prepares them for quietly committing more horrid abominations, Mat.

xxvi. 69,—75. 2 Sam. xi : xii. 1 Kings xi. 1,—7. 2 Chron. xvi. (7.) He sometimes *apes the Spirit of God*. He tempts to good deeds, that they may be performed unreasonably, in an improper manner, by improper persons, or in a degree impossible in this life, or to promote a bad end. And, because the language of scripture is most majestic and striking,—least suspected,—and conveys temptations most insensibly into the heart of such as regard it, he often makes use of it, to clothe and varnish over his suggestions, 1 Cor. xi. 14.

By such methods, Satan tempts persons of all sorts and ranks to commit sins, especially such as are peculiarly suited to their circumstances. **YOUNG PERSONS** he tempts to pride, to vain and sinful diversions, to unchastity,—and to associate themselves with vain, light, or lewd companions,—to take up with worldly things, pleasure, honour, or profits, as the portion of their soul,—to neglect the knowledge of God, and to delay all serious concern about their eternal salvation. **THE OLD** he tempts to self conceit, covetousness, peevishness, worldly mindedness, and thoughtlessness of death, and neglect of preparation for it, and presumptuous or stupid confidence, that they are ready for it. **THE AFFLICTED** he tempts to overlook their mercies, and aggravate their troubles in their own mind ; to stupidity under their affliction, weariness of it, murmuring against God, the author of it, quarreling with the instruments of it, impenitent continuance in the sinful causes of it ;—to neglect due concern for the sanctified use of it ;—or endeavour to obtain deliverance from it, by some merely carnal, or really sinful means. **THE RICH, PROSPEROUS, and GREAT**, he tempts to carnal and covetous attachment towards earthly things ;—to atheistical forgetfulness of God, blasphemy of his name, contempt of his word and ordinances, and persecution of his people ;—to want of sympathy with the poor and distressed ;

distressed ;—to luxurious intemperance, prodigality, open profaneness, and overbearing haughtiness. The **POOR** he tempts to discontentment, dishonesty, envy of the rich, murmuring, practising of base trades, and sinful compliances with the great for their carnal advantage. **LEARNED MEN** he tempts to disbelieve and contemn the scriptures, or judge of their contents by carnal corrupted reason ; —to employ their time, opportunities or abilities in curious, carnal and trifling enquiries, rather than in studying to know Christ and him crucified ; —to study divine truths in a philosophical manner ; to invent and propagate errors and superstitions ; to hunt after novelties of opinion ; and to kindle or perpetuate and spread empty, angry, and wicked debates. **IGNORANT** persons he tempts to shift, despise, and hate the means of solid instruction, especially in the things of God in Christ ; to relish their own stupidity ; contemn useful, and especially religious knowledge ; —to wallow in beastly vices ; and content themselves with a beastly manner of performing their work in their callings, trade, family, &c.

He tempts **MAGISTRATES** to give their subjects a bad example of behaviour ; —to make bad laws, or neglect to execute such as are good ; to an atheistical indifference about the real welfare of the church, and the advancement of the true religion ; —to persecute the godly and faithful ; encourage the wicked and admit them into places of power and trust ; to oppression of their subjects, giving and taking of bribes, imposing, urging, or administering *unlawful, dubious, or unnecessary* oaths ; to partiality in, or perversion of judgment, especially in favours of their friends, or the rich and great. He tempts **LAWYERS** to encourage unnecessary law suits ; to undertake the pleading of base and dishonourable causes ; to conceal, deny, misrepresent, or outface the truth ; to negligent or partial management of
good

good causes, and examination of witnesses ; to protract the determination of debates, in order to increase their own gain ; and in fine, in their work, to make their own honour or gain, not the glory of God, their chief end, and forget the account which they themselves must soon make at the judgment-seat of Jesus Christ. He tempts MINISTERS to regard their own honour, ease or gain too much, and the honour of Jesus Christ and spiritual edification of souls too little ;—to think and speak of divine things as a necessary part of their external business, without labouring to apply them to their own heart ; to rely on their own gifts in their preparation for, and performance of their work ; to rest contented with, if not conceited of, their outwardly diligent administration of the ordinances of the gospel ; to neglect habitual fervent prayer for preparation, assistance, and success in their work, or thanksgiving for what they receive ;—to flatter their hearers with smooth things in order to procure their affection, applause, or presents ; to aim at the discovery of their own learning, eloquence, piety or zeal, in their ministrations ;—to kindle, perpetuate, or spread vain, wicked, and angry debates, or craftily revive old errors ; or, by specious shifts, to violate the solemn engagements to Christ and his church, under which they came at their ordination, &c ;—to seek preeminence, power, or fame above their brethren ; to live in such an untender, carnal, or lifeless manner, as hardens their people in sin.

He tempts such as are UNCONCERNED about their eternal salvation to believe themselves good Christians, and hope that they shall die the death of the righteous ; and to continue and further proceed in their sinful sloth or wicked conversation. He tempts those who are UNDER CONVICTIONS, either to stifle them by carnal pleasures, labours, riches, fellowship with wicked persons, or presumptuous persuasions of the goodness of their state ;—or by le-
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gal resolutions of religious strictness and concern in some after period,—or by present legal reformation in their own strength;—or to weaken them by narrow and partial uptakings of the law of God;—or to outrun their convictions, in despairing of God's mercy, persuading themselves, that their day of grace is past, or that they have sinned the unpardonable sin against the Holy Ghost;—or in attempting to take away their own life.—He tempts those that are UNCONVERTED to continue in their ignorance of themselves, Christ and his covenant, and in their unconcern about eternal salvation; to rest contented with an external attendance on gospel ordinances, without enjoying any fellowship with Christ and his Spirit in them; to believe themselves already united to Christ, and renewed in their heart;—to take up with a mere outward profession,—notional knowledge of divine truths,—self righteousness, and gospel ordinances, as their Saviours in his stead; to contemn and shun the company of experienced and tender saints; to esteem profane persons, or carnal professors of religion, and make them their favourite companions. He tempts those that are really CONVERTED to live and trust in themselves, rather than on Christ and his promises; to indulge or encourage doubts of his love or saving connexion with them; to seek and take up with pleasant frames, instead of Christ himself; to live ignorant of, or inactive in the life of faith on God's bare word; to rest contented with small measures of grace and spiritual experience, and without any distinct knowledge of their spiritual state or condition; to walk unworthy of their dignified state of union to Christ, justification, adoption, and regeneration, and the mercies which they have received; to study conformity to, and intimacy with carnal men, instead of pitying and praying for them; and to proportion their spiritual hope, joy, and courage to their own tempers and attainments. He

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tempts those saints that are UNDER DIVINE DESERTION and SPIRITUAL DISTRESS, to think themselves unconverted; to discredit the promises of the gospel, and put them from themselves, as things not suited, or not belonging to them; to murmur against God and his providence; to despair of all happy issue of their trouble; give up attendance on gospel ordinances; or even to imbrue their hands in their own blood. He tempts those that have enjoyed REMARKABLE FELLOWSHIP WITH GOD, and do walk in the light of his countenance,—to pride; to rest on their pleasant frames and received graces, instead of Christ and his promises; and to undervalue or entertain harsh and unsympathizing thoughts of those that habitually live in darkness, doubts, and inward distress.

Satan, as permitted by God, tempts men of all sorts to *every form of sin*, and by *every form of argument* drawn from secrecy, honour, profit, pleasure, safety, example, and the like. But with respect to the immediate concerns of their eternal state, he especially tempts them to PRESUMPTION or DESPAIR.—In general, PRESUMPTION includes an ill grounded confidence that we are in Christ and his covenant, when we are not; that God will in mercy save us from hell, and receive us to heaven, though we continue in our sins; that, if it be necessary, we shall have time and grace to repent of our sins before we die, though we neglect it for the present; that God will make gracious allowances for our faults, on account of our circumstances in the world; that he will bear with, support and comfort us beyond what his promises import; that we shall obtain happy ends without using proper means; and shall escape while we rush upon temptations to them. It peculiarly includes an appropriation of gospel promises under the improper characters of *sensible sinners; sincere, good hearted*, and the like.—DESPAIR chiefly consists in a fearful apprehension, that

that God's gospel promises are not suited to our case, and will not be ever fulfilled upon us.

In tempting men to *presume that they are in Christ*, when they are not, Satan decks out and magnifies their attainments, experiences and behaviour. He represents the common conduct of others in an unfavourable light,—how untender, some precious saints have been in comparison of them. He works up men's pride and self love to decide in favours of themselves.—To persuade men, that *God will pardon their sin*, notwithstanding their continuance in it, he represents God's infinite mercy as separated from his infinite majesty, justice, holiness, and faithful threatenings : he represents their sins as but small, or as necessarily committed in their circumstances.—To persuade them to *delay their repentance* of sin, he diverts their mind from the consideration of God's infinite majesty, holiness and justice, and of the spirituality and exceeding breadth of his law ;—and of the greatness, number, and aggravations of their sins ;—and of death, judgment, and eternity : he suggests, that their life bids fair to continue long ;—and that true repentance is very easy, and may be well enough performed in their dying moments.

In *tempting men to despair*, Satan often first entangles them in some horrid crime, or obtrudes some horrid suggestion into their heart. He then labours to persuade them, That they were certainly reprobated in the decree of God,—that their sins were become unpardonable,—that their day of grace and of the striving of God's Spirit is expired,—that their former experiences were all mere delusions,—that now it is impossible for them to attain to any thing better,—that God's infinite holiness, justice, and truth, cannot now admit of their salvation,—that the devil, who had, for a time, gone out of them, to permit them to appear religious, is now returned

returned with seven other spirits worse than himself, to render their last estate altogether miserable and desperate.

In *indirect tempting of men to self-murder*, Satan stirs up holy men to do more in religious duties, than their call from God requires, or their strength permits; he seduceth men to exceed in sensual pleasures,—to labour beyond their ability,—to eat and drink beyond the cravings of their appetite,—or to attempt hazardous exploits without proper necessity.—In his *direct temptation of men to self murder*, he makes some affront, loss, or danger ly heavy on their mind; or he fills them with horror and disquiet; and so renders them weary of their life,—and unthoughtful of eternal things. He suggests, that such a death hath little or no sin in it,—that it may prove a satisfaction for their sins,—that it will prevent, or put an end to their shame and trouble on earth,—and perhaps introduce them quickly into eternal happiness: Or, he suggests, that in hell they cannot be much more unhappy than they are; and by knowing the worst of their punishment, will be freed from the terrors of inconceivable wrath coming upon them. Or, especially, if the custom of the country permit, he represents it as an heroic deed.

PRESUMPTION being extremely heinous, and offensive to God, and ruinous to men,—exceedingly answerable to their pride and self-love,—and so hard to be convinced of, or reclaimed from, Satan *especially tempts them to it*. Profane persons presume on the misapprehended mercy or fancied impotence of God, and daring him to his face, rush on in their impieties, Deut. xxix. 19. Hypocrites presume, that their outward appearances and common experiences will secure their eternal happiness, Mat. vii. 21.—23. Desperate persons presume, in abandoning themselves to new forms, or further degrees of wickedness, Gen. iv. Mat. xxvii. 3,—5.

Isa. xxii. 12,—14. Saints presume, in sinning against much light and love,—in opposing their wisdom to the word of God, or their inclinations to his purposes and providence,—in their legal reliance on privileges and graces received,—and in high flights of rash and improper zeal, Psal. xix. 12.

Never, in this world, are any secured against temptation; but the peculiar seasons of it are.—When men meet with uncommon prosperity or adversity: When they are called to some very important and arduous work for the Lord: When they have received some remarkable manifestation of his special love: When their implanted graces slumber and languish: When self confidence greatly prevails: And when death draweth near, Prov. xxx. 8. Zech. iii. 1. Mat. iv. 1, —11. 2 Cor. xii. 7. Song v. 2, 3. Mat. xxvi. 35. 69.—74. Psalm xxiii. 4. And in such seasons, especially the last, the best of men are apt to be most terribly tempted. Satan hath a peculiar hatred at them. God takes pleasure to exemplify the good effects of temptation in them. Satan finds much matter to work upon in them. Their falls exceedingly discredit the Lord, and his way, and church, and harden others in sin, 1 Pet. v. 8. Eph. vi. 11, 12.

Satan's temptations to commit sinful acts, have arrived at an ESPECIAL HEIGHTH, or dangerous crisis. When they have become extremely urgent; and When affrightments and allurements are therein connected.—He brings them to this especial height by his long continued fixing of our imagination on the object of them,—by entangling our affections into a good liking to it, and so ministering oil and fuel to our inward lusts: by his drawing in others around to co-operate with him in seducing us to the love of the sin to which he tempts,—and by infolding many things not evil in themselves, in the temptation, James i. 14. 1 Tim. ii. 18.—Men have entered into temptation, When their affections

are tickled while they think, hear, or speak of the sin to which they are tempted; when they are, without fear, surrounded with opportunities of committing it; when their lusts are invigorated or inflamed by the temptation; and when, under it, they become unwatchful and negligent of the exercise of faith, prayer, and other religious duties.

In order to RETAIN those in his net, whom he hath once entangled in his enticements to sin, Satan (1.) Labours to cause them *finish and increase their sinful work*. He tempts them to other forms or parts of it, or the same over and over again. He improves their commission of one sin as a reason of their committing another. He represents loose livers as happy, and strict walkers with God, as not so. He misrepresents the law of God, as if it allowed an indulgence in human frailties, and fashionable vices,—or as rigid; and so irritates their inward lusts, 2 Sam. xi; xii. 1 Kings xi. 1,—7. Psal. lxxiii. 1,—16. and lxxvii. 7,—9. (2.) He labours to *sleepen their conscience*, and keep their mind quiet while they are sinning. For this purpose, he forbears all his affrighting suggestions: he keeps them from the light,—from such books, sermons, converse, or even thoughts, as might tend to awaken them: he hinders their meeting with faithful Christian reproof: he, by his own suggestions, and by his instruments, flatters them in their evil ways, and even sometimes entertains them with a kind of spiritual pleasure attending them: thro' reproach and persecution of the truth, he deters them from hearing or listening to it: he catcheth away the word of truth after it hath been sown upon them in the preaching of the gospel, or choaks the growth of it, by the impression of carnal cares: he persuades men, That they are true, if not choice saints,—or at least as good as their neighbours;—and that their particular sin shall never be known to the world;—and that, for the present at least, they may delay

ny concern about it, Rom. vii. 23. Amos vii. 12. Mat. xiii 19,—21 :—and to make them hate and rebel against the light presented to them, he fills them with prejudice against the instrument which brings it ; he stirs up their passions against it ; and represents it as injurious to their honour or interest, to turn back and repent, 1 Kings xxii. 8. Amos vii. 10 Eph. v. 13. (3.) He sometimes *feigns a departure* from men, in order to render them secure,—or make them proper tools for disparaging religion by carrying on some piece of his work, under a cloak of pretended piety or zeal ; and that he may afterward return to them, with redoubled advantage.—In his pretended departure from men, he suspends the prosecution of his present design, particularly, when some divine providences, ordinances, or influences, shut them up to religious affections or behaviour,—when there is no opportunity of committing the sin to which he was tempting them,—when the restraining or saving influences of God fortify their heart against it,—and when the awe of magistrates, ministers, divine judgments, convictions, or prevalence of gospel light, deter or shame them from it.—In his pretended departure, he also abates the violence of his temptations, and permits men to enjoy a quietness in religious exercises, or even a pleasure produced by his tickling of their fancy or affections.—Or he exchangeth his temptations, enticing them to one gross, but now more fashionable sin, instead of another,—or to more refined iniquities instead of grosser ones,—or to such sins as their honour, station, or strength will now admit of,—or even to religious appearances and things really good, instead of things really and grossly abominable, Gen. xxvii. 41. and xxviii. 6. Josh. ii. 7. Psal. lxxviii. 34. 2 Pet. ii. 18. (4.) He labours to *shut up every avenue of retreat* from the sin committed in the way of gospel repentance.

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He dasheth every resolution against it : he represents God in a most terrifying light ; he suggests the needlessness and impossibility of true repentance : he stirs up friends and neighbours to hinder all reformation from it by their example, reproach, or persecution : he violently urgeth to persevering continuance in it, and wounds the conscience with fearful and dispiriting accusations for it, 2 Tim. ii. 26. Eccl. vii. 26. Jer. ii. 25. Ezek. xxxvii. 11. 2 Kings vi. 33.

II. With respect to RELIGIOUS DUTIES, Satan labours, by his temptations,

(1.) To HINDER the performance of them.— For this purpose, he lays *outward stops* or blocks in the way of it. He *indisposeth* our body by weakness, weariness, or drowsiness, and our soul by ignorance, prejudice, passion, dulness, confusion, care, or worldly business. He *discourageth* from it, on account of the burden of it, our unworthiness and unfitness for it, former want of success in it, and hence the tendency of it to our deeper damnation. He *stirs up a dislike* of it, on account of the reproach and danger attending it, the outward meanness of it, the instruments employed in it, not performing their parts to our taste, and the loose carriage of many who profess strictness in it. He sophistically insinuates, That Jesus Christ hath done all for us ; —that we are freed from all obligation to duties, and are above the meaner sort of them ; —that we are not bound to such degrees of strictness as others ; —that God will make merciful allowances for our circumstances ; —that we, as well as many others, may have good hearts, and obtain salvation by God's grace, without performance of many duties ; and that God hath forbidden us to be righteous overmuch, &c. He instigates to less important duties, in order to make us neglect such as are more important, —or to prepare for future or public duties to the neglect

neglect of present, private, or secret ones,—or to such religious exercises as are not required of us, in order to make us neglect such as are required.— Sometimes he threatens to terrify or hurt men in the performance of religious duties, if they attempt it.

(2.) He labours to VITIATE the performance of religious duties. In our *undertaking* of them, he prompts to perform them in a rash and careless manner, or from carnal and wicked principles or motives,—or at improper times,—or in improper places,—or in our own strength,—with an heart cleaving to its inward lusts,—or to improper ends, without regard to the authority, or submission to the direction of God, Eccl. v. 1. Ezek. xiv. 3. Jerem. xliii. 2.—In the *performance* of them, he distracts our soul,—leading off our eyes and ears by some external appearance or noise,—seducing our mind to fix upon some different, perhaps spiritual object,—filling our heart with vain, carnal, selfish, proud, blasphemous, malicious, wanton or covetous thoughts and inclinations, or our conscience with stupidity, partiality, or the like. Or he *corrupts the performance itself*,—making us chiefly careful of its outward dress, or to mingle it with superstition, or to exceed in the duties of positive institution. In the improvement of them, he renders us proud of our manner of performing them,—disposed to trust in them, or rely on them for our acceptance with God : or, he renders us hopeless of success or acceptance on account of our manifold failings, and unthankful to God for the assistance he bestowed.

Satan thus hinders and corrupts our performance of religious duties, that he may deprive us of our spiritual armour, intercept our spiritual provision and assistance, and exert his own malice against God and our soul ;—and because such temptations have always some success, and are very destructive in their nature

nature and tendency, rendering the gospel of our salvation the *savour of death unto death*.

III. Satan CORRUPTS men's mind with ERROR,

(1.) By a direct *seduction of their understanding* into it. For this purpose, he begins his deceiving work in a near connection with, and likeness to divine truths, and insensibly and gradually removes to a greater distance from it. He clothes the error which he propagates in scripture language, and pretends, that it hath Scriptural, at least rational proof. He decks it out with specious, reasonable, or mysterious appearances,—bold, affected, or long current expressions,—pious designs,—apparent miracles,—or immediate inspirations, or powerful, pleasant and quickening suggestions. He pretends the singular countenance of God's providence to it, and the propagators of it, and adherents to it. He stirs up some that are thought remarkably holy and learned, to favour, if not propagate it. He improves the unwary expressions of men famed for orthodoxy, especially those of former ages who cannot now explain themselves, for supporting it. He raiseth a storm of crafty and shameless calumny against the truth and its faithful adherents, 2 Thess. ii. 9, 10. 1 Tim. iv. 1,—4. 1 Tim. iv. 3, 4. Matth. xxiv. 24.

(2.) By *engaging their affections into the love of error*. For this purpose, he makes them fall in love with those that are infected with it; and thus insensibly become well affected towards it. He disposeth the propagators of it to a peculiarly affable and engaging, or even flattering manner of behaviour. He decks the error itself in a gorgeous dress, affected plainness, appearances of order, strictness, zeal or fitness for reconciliation of differences among the godly or learned: or he mingles it with some delightful manifestations of truth. He biasseth the affections, by pretences of advantage in the embracement of it, or of hurt and danger in opposing it.

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excites their passions and pride to work in favours of it; and he seduceth the defenders of the truth to some imprudent management, ungaining behaviour, use of improper phrases, or the like.

It is an evidence that men *are under the influence of Satan's seductions to error*, when they make high pretences to spiritual illumination or liberty, intimate fellowship with God, and zeal for his cause, without eminent holiness of practice;—when they are extremely keen in imposing their disputable sentiments or practices on others;—or, when they indulge themselves in lies to promote their own cause; or in reproach and contempt of such as differ from them, Jude 16. 2 Theff. ii. 3.—10. 2 Cor. x. 10.

Satan is *much set on the infecting of men's mind with error*, because it is very sinful of itself, being a contradiction of the declarations of Jehovah ratified in the blood of his Son for the salvation of mankind: it is an increasing and spreading evil, apt to produce much hatred, division and reproach among church-members. It obstructs the exercise of inward grace, hinders reformation, produceth many wicked practices, encourageth onlookers in their carnal and loose opinions and behaviour; and exposeth men to the judgment of God here and hereafter, 2 Tim. iii. 2,—6, 9, 13. 1 Tim. vi. 3, 4. 2 Pet. ii. 1, 2, 3. Rev. ii. 16,—22.

Moreover, Satan hath many *great advantages against men for infecting their mind with error*; as he can bewitch their imagination, and overwhelm their judgment with specious arguments, or unanswerable like objections.—Their knowledge is but very imperfect. The corruption of their nature, and their contracted prejudices, powerfully bias them towards error. They are much under the power of sinful curiosity. Continuance in sin debaucheth their conscience with harsh, unworthy, or atheistical thoughts of God, Gal. iii. 1. 1 Cor. ii. 14. Rom. i. 18,—32.

IV. In his DISTRESSING OF THE SOULS of men, particularly believers, Satan (1.) *Disquiets their mind.* And, if they be of an angry, proud, passionate, peevish, melancholy, effeminate, or excessively sympathizing temper, this gives him especial advantage,—as he can work on these tempers by contempt, injury, disappointments, sore afflictions, personal or relative prosperity of the wicked, and the like, Job xix. 15. and xxi. 7. and xxx. 26. Jer. xx. 7. Psal. lxxvii. These things, by the permission of God, are often *much in the power of Satan.* He can improve such things, when he finds them ready to his hand, for his own wicked purposes. He can employ others to form occasions of disquiet for us, or to vitiate our tempers. He can revive our remembrance of former causes of disquiet. He can represent these things as much worse than they really are; and thus excite our passions, and render them more violent. He can shut up our mind to think on that which tends most to disquiet it.—Moreover, these tempers having much sinful corruption in them, it is easily kindled into a flame, when it meets with a proper occasion or excitement, Job i,—iii. James iv. 1. Jer. xx. 7.—18. and xv. 18. Psalm lxxiii. 1, —16. and lxxvii. 7,—9. and xxxix. 3 —By craftily improving these tempers, and their correspondent occasions and excitements, Satan discomposeth our minds,—as they hinder the conveyance of divine comfort, and render us unable and unwilling to receive them. Being evil in themselves, these tempers, agitated by Satan, hinder our performance of religious duties, at least in a right manner,—weaken and confound our soul, and render it an easy prey for Satan,—provoke God to leave us in his hand,—and lead our mind to harsh thoughts of him and of ourselves, and of our lot, as if no affliction had ever been like ours,—as if we had no reason to expect deliverance, or, as if we were probably re-

probates, or had committed the unpardonable blasphemy against the Holy Ghost, Job x. 2, 16, 17. Psal. xxxviii. 4, 5. and lxxiii. 1,—16. and lxxvii. 1,—9. and lxxxviii. 1,—18. Heb. vi. 4, 5. and x. 26,—31. Mat. xii. 31, 32.

(2.) He *affrights their conscience*. For this purpose, he violently suggests, and, as it were, forceth into their mind atheistical and blasphemous thoughts, as, That there is no God ; or, that he is unfaithful, unholy, unjust, cruel, seeking their hurt, and delighting in their misery : that all the revelations contained in the Bible are but an imposture : that gospel ordinances are absurd or unworthy observances : that it were best to curse God and die ; or the like.—To make these suggestions fix the more deeply, he attacks men, when they are stretching their understanding in the contemplation of fundamental truths, or when they are in great trouble,—and represents unto them, how providence afflicts the virtuous, and prospers the wicked ; how the scriptures seem to contradict common sense, or one another ; how the promises of the Bible, after they have been believed and pled, ly unfulfilled,—to themselves and others ; and how unsuitable to the spirituality, infinite majesty and wisdom of God, the instituted ordinances of Revelation are.—He violently suggests, that they themselves are reprobated by the predestining purpose of God, or have sinned the unpardonable sin, or have outsinned their day of grace. To persuade them of this, he, in the worst light, represents unto them, how long their hardness of heart hath continued and increased under the means of grace ; how hidden the gospel is to them ; and how wilfully they have sinned against great light and love, convictions and resolutions :—and bears in upon their mind, such terrible scriptures, as he thinks best calculated to render them desperate, as 2 Cor. iii. 14. and iv. 3, 4. Heb. vi. 4, 5. and x. 26,—31. Mat. xii. 31, 32, 43,—45. 2 Pet. ii. 18,

—22.—He fixeth their thoughts on their great guilt, and on the infernal punishments which they may expect,—and sometimes he affrights them with dreams of their final condemnation by God, conflagration into the hand of devils, entry into hell, or the like,—and even when they are awake, he impresseth on their fancy the most terrible imaginations; as if devils were just going to appear, were ready to tear them in pieces; or, as if the earth were rending to swallow them, and hell opening to receive them.—For the same purpose also, he assaults them with horrible temptations to commit sins which they peculiarly abhor,—or sins most unnatural; as denying or cursing of God, worshipping of devils, or devoting themselves to them, self murder, unnatural uncleanness, or the like: and after he hath, as he had opportunity, violently urged them to these things, he chargeth them with full or partial compliance, Psalm lxxvii; lxxxviii. Matth. iv. i, —10.

(3.) He *saddens the heart* of believers, particularly when they are in the pangs of their new birth; when they have solemnly repented of some grievous sin; when they are under some deep melancholy or heavy affliction;—when he hath cast his horrid and blasphemous suggestions into their mind; or when they are dying. For this purpose, he raiseth doubts in their mind, whether they be united to Christ, or in the way of their duty;—or makes their own conscience represent their spiritual state or condition much worse than it really is. For this end, he represents their sins in the most terrible light, as infinitely numerous and heinous, committed against great light and love, mercies and judgments, convictions, warnings, and solemn vows. He especially holds up to their view such of their sins as are most unlike the spots of God's children; and along therewith represents such scriptures as exhibit the highest attainments of mere hypocrites and reprobates,

bates, 1 John iii. 9. Rev. xxi. 8. John iv. 18. 1 Pet. ii. 19,—22. Ma. lviii. 2. Heb. vi. 4, 5. Matth. xiii. 20,—22. He obtrudes upon their mind the vulgar errors of exercised souls, as, That conversion is alway attended with much inward terror ;—that all true believers know WHEN and HOW they were converted ;—that conversion is alway followed with remarkable gifts or freedom in prayer, and with much spiritual comfort ;—that growth in grace is alway discernible ; and the like. He represents the justice, holiness and greatness of God, as forbidding their familiar approaches to him in prayer, or trusting in him ; and his providences, prosperous or adverse, as working for their hurt. He represents God's hidings and reproofs, and the prevalence of sinful lusts and temptations, as evidences that he hath no pleasure in them.—While he weakens and overclouds that grace which they have, he represents the discriminating marks of real grace too high. He pusheth them to self examination, when their soul is most disordered, and their grace least discernible,—and, by filling them with sullen fears, draws them to suspect, and then believe their state to be bad, and that it never will or can be made better, Psal. xxxi. 22, and lxxii. 1,—16. and lxxvii. 7,—9.

(4.) He, in very different forms and degrees, *wounds men's spirits* by his temptations. While God hides himself from them, or frowns upon them, and outward troubles, infernal injections and solicitations, inward confusion, melancholic despondency and terror, prevail, Psal. lxxiii ; lxxvii ; and lxxxviii. and xlii. 2, 7, 8, 10, 11. and xliii. 2, 5, and xliii. 1,—4. He violently forceth in upon their mind such terrible scriptures as 1 Cor. xi. 27, 29. 1sa. vi. 9, 10. and lviii. 2. Matth. xii. 31, 32, 43,—45. and xiii. 20,—22. 2 Cor. iiii. 14. and iv. 3, 4. Phil. iii. 18, 19. Heb. vi. 4, 5. and x. 26,—31, 39. and xii. 15,—17. Rev. xxii. 11. Ezek. xxiv. 14. He artfully

artfully represents their sins, especially those that seem best fitted to mark them given up by God to their own lusts, in the most dreadful light. He represents God as most terrible and ill affected towards them. By his vile suggestions, violent harrassments, or unseasonable and irregular urgency to religious duties, he fills them with terror, confusion or stupidity. He discourageth them from the Lord's supper, or hurries them forward to it, in an improper manner. And, do what they will, he accuseth them of fearful wickedness.—By awakening their inward fears, he disposeth them to a readiness to entertain his most vile and discouraging suggestions; and shuts their hearts, eyes and ears against every thing comfortable and encouraging. He even inspires them with an infernal skill in raising such shrewd objections against their own comfort, as God alone can answer, Job vi; x. Psal. lxxiii; lxxvii; lxxxviii. Ezek. xxxvii. 11.

As Satan especially wounds men's spirits, when they have been guilty of some conscience-wasting sins, as murder, adultery, perjury, presumptuous denial of divine truths, or when they have lain long under outward trouble, Psal. li. Job xxx. 31. and i,—iii; vi; x; xix. his attempts often issue in the most deplorable EFFECTS. For a time, the wounded conceal their case, that they may hide the abominable crimes which especially torment them; or because they think it would be hypocritical for them to pretend to spiritual exercises, or it would, at last, expose them, or religion, to the scorn of those around them.—When they break over these bars, they are apt to become imprudent and unseasonable in their representation of their case to others. Their frequently repeated condemnation, of themselves confirms their persuasion, that they are unregenerate, and will probably, if not certainly, be damned for ever.—Under inexpressible apprehensions of their ruined condition, they are apt to vent their inward

ward anguish in doleful outcries, or in wishes, that they had never been born, or had been formed toads, serpents, or the like ; or had been cut off by death, when they had less guilt.—Their health fails ; their beauty fades, and terror marks their countenance. They become careless about their bodies, employments, and families. They look on their food, raiment, and other temporal enjoyments, and even the ordinances of God, as cursed to them ; and hence are afraid to use them ;—and abstain from them. If God's mercy interpose not, they are apt to blaspheme and curse him, and to endeavour violence against their own life. Job xx. 14. and xvi. 6. Psal lxxxviii. 8, 15. and xxxii. 3. and xxxix. 11. and vi. 6. and xxxviii. 4, 5. Job iii. 11, 12. and vi. 6. and vii. 15.

Satan's REASONS for thus distressing men's souls, are, That he is full of the most inveterate malice against God and them. Their conscience, while weak, ignorant, and loaded and affrighted with guilt, cannot easily determine concerning these difficult points which relate to their spiritual state or condition. God, for holy and wise ends, gives up men, for a time, into his hand. By depriving the saints of their spiritual comfort, which mark the love of God to them, and is their strength and ornament,—he confounds and distracts their soul, and renders them unfit for religious duties, and discourageth them from them,—as if difficult, impossible, unprofitable, or even sinful for them. He renders this their trouble a stumbling block to others, and an enforcement of his temptation of themselves, to heartless complaining and murmuring,—unthankfulness for mercies received or promised,—misinterpreting and quarreling with God's providences,—sinful wishes against themselves,—despair of relief,—or attempting to have it by licentiousness, self-murder, or the like. He also hereby abuseth the scriptures, by applying them to men's souls from malice and hatred,

in

in an improper time, manner, and sense, and in order to shut men up in themselves, and hinder them from Christ and the way of holiness.

In all the temptations of Satan, God hath an holy hand in permitting them, affording opportunities for them.—limiting them in matter, degree and duration, and in overruling them for the glory of his wisdom, power and grace; and for the trial and edification and honour of his people,—and for the infamy and further misery of Satan himself, and his obstinate followers, Job i; ii. 1 Cor. x. 13. 2 Cor. xii. 7.—9. 1 Kings xxii. 22, 23. 2 Sam. xxiv. 1. John xiii. 27, 31, 32. and xii. 31, 32.—The tempted persons have ordinarily a sinful hand in the temptation, by their provoking God to trust them with it;—by their rushing on the occasions or appearances of sin;—by their going to the uttermost bounds of Christian liberty;—by their indulging of themselves in unnecessary familiarity with the wicked;—or, by their neglect of the proper means of avoiding, resisting, or overcoming temptations, Gen. iii. 7. 1 Cor. vii. 5. 2 Sam. xi; xii. 1 Kings xi. Matth. xxvi. 69, —74.

V. Love of honour and reputation in the world; fear of shame, ignominy, external loss or damage; aversion to wound our conscience, or expose ourselves to eternal damnation; opposition of them with merely rational arguments, or even scriptural ones, without a present exercise of faith on these scriptures, and the like, are, *in no respect, sufficient* antidotes or remedies against Satan's temptations. The inconceivable power of our indwelling lusts can easily tempt us to sins, that will not expose us to shame in this world, or disquiet our natural conscience. And, he is too able, subtle, and obstinate for any man to contend with, in the way of rational disputation.

But

But the proper REMEDIES OR MEANS OF RESISTING his temptations are, in general, (1.) To be *strong in the Lord and the power of his might*, Eph. vi. 10. 2 Tim. ii. 1. (2.) To *put on the whole armour of God*, the *breast-plate* of Christ's imputed righteousness and implanted grace,—the *helmet* of the hope of salvation,—the *girdle of truth*,—the *shoes of the preparation of the gospel of peace*,—the *sword of the Spirit*, which is the word of God,—the *shield of faith*, which quencheth all the fiery darts of the devil,—and the *artillery of all prayer and of fasting*, Eph. vi. 11,—18. 1 Thess. v. 8. Matth. xvii. 21. (3.) In a proper improvement of Christ's power and grace, and of his spiritual armour, to watch carefully against all temptations, 1 Pet. v. 8. Mark xiii. 33, 35, 37. and xiv. 38. (4.) Earnestly to resist them till they be overcome, 1 Pet. iii. 9. Jam. iv. 7.

(1.) To be *strong in the Lord*, implies our having our union with Jesus Christ fixed and established by faith; and, as in him, to depend by faith on his person, offices, and relations, and promises, as our security against the prevalence of our spiritual enemies, and the source of our strength to oppose them;—and by faith to draw all our principal motives and encouragements to resistance, and all our hopes of victory over them, from what he is in himself, and to us; and from what he hath done for us, and hath promised to us, Eph. vi. 10. 2 Tim. ii. 1. Zech. x. 12. Isa. xlv. 24.

(2.) Our putting on of Christ's imputed righteousness, and improving it for a BREAST-PLATE, is of great use to resist and overcome temptations. It removes off our persons and conscience the curse of the broken law, which is the *strength of sin*, and defence of Satan. It secures God's almighty exercise of all his perfections in our favours, in opposition to sin and Satan. It produceth the clearest discoveries of the evil of sin, and of the beauty, excellency, usefulness and easiness of holiness; and thus enable,

enables our conscience to discern it, and inflames our heart and affections with the keenest hatred and resentment against it, as a murder of the great God our Saviour, Rom. vi. 4, 14. and xvii. 4. Rev. xii. 12.—The possession and exercise of implanted grace fortifies against temptation, as God cannot give it up into Satan's hands, and it cannot be reconciled to sin; and it encourageth, enables and inclines us to use the whole armour of God, in a proper manner, Rom. vii. 7, 23,—25. Gal. v. 17.

Our having the GIRDLE of God's truth in law and gospel, closely applied to our heart, and productive of real grace and candid sincerity in it, is of use to deter and dispirit Satan, and to fortify our soul against every sinful compliance, Rev. xii. 12.—Our having on the HELMET of salvation, or the hope of it, is of great use, as it restrains dispiriting, dejecting fears and faintings under trouble, encourageth us, by delightful and well-grounded assurances of assistance against, victory over every temptation, and an inexpressible glorious reward of our faithful and valiant opposition, 2 Cor. iv. 16,—18. and i. 10. To have our *feet shod with the preparation of the gospel of peace*, by a well grounded knowledge and heart engaging experience of the doctrines and promises of the gospel, is no less necessary and useful; as these encourage us to hope for God's protection and assistance;—they are means of conveying light, life, power, liberty and comfort, into our soul, for upholding, strengthening, exhilarating and animating us to oppose temptation;—they most clearly and powerfully manifest the strongest reasons against our compliance with temptations;—and they fill our soul with better things than any which Satan can promise; and from the fulness of Christ, mightily increase and invigorate our faith, love and zeal, in opposition to temptation, Eph. vi. 15.

As the word of God is given for that purpose ; as Jesus Christ, by means of it, resisted and overcame the strongest temptations ; as it plainly represents what is sin, and the dreadful nature of it, and of compliance with it,—and the vanity of all that profit, pleasure or honour, by which Satan can tempt us ; as it dispirits Satan, and is the means of bringing Christ and his Father and Spirit to our assistance, and of conveying his all encouraging love, and quickening and strengthening grace into our heart, it is remarkably useful in our resistance of temptations.—But, in using this sword of the Spirit, we must not imagine, that the leaves on which it is written, or the sound, or even merely rational sense of its words, can, in the least, resist or overcome Satanical influence. But, as divinely persuaded by its own manifested light and power, that it is indeed the word of God,—as delighting in its perfect holiness and sanctifying virtue,—and depending on God as in Christ, to make his grace sufficient for us, and to arise for our help, according to the tenor of it, we must have it dwelling richly in us,—that by faith in it, we may, on every occasion, readily and earnestly oppose God's doctrinal declarations, laws, promises, or threatenings, or all together, to the particular temptation, with which we are assaulted. Thus, if we be tempted to Atheism, let us repel it with Rom. i. 19, 20. Exod. iii. 14. and xx. 2. Psalm l. 7. Isa. xlii. 8. If we are tempted to unbelief, let us repel it with 1 John iii. 23. 2 Chron. xx. 20. John iii. 16, 18, 36. 1 Tim. i. 15. Rom. xv. 12. Phil. i. 29. If we are tempted to a legal dependence on our own righteousness before God, let us repel it with Rom. iii. 10.—20 and ix. 30,—32. and x. 3. Isa. lxiv. 6. Phil. iii. 9. Rom v. 21. 2 Cor. v. 21. Isa. xlv. 24, 25. and xlii. 12, 13. If we are tempted to indulge ignorance of spiritual truth, let us repel it with Prov. iv. 5, 7. and xix. 2. 1 Chron. xxviii. 9. John xviii. 3. Isa. xxi. 9. and
xxix.

xxix. 18, 24. If we be tempted to hypocrisy, let us repel it with Jer. xvii. 10. 2 Tim. iii. 5. 1 Cor. iv. 5. If we be tempted to superstition, let us repel it with Isa. lxvi. 3. Col. ii. 16,—23. Deut. xii. 32. Isa. i. 12. If we be tempted to the neglect of God's instituted ordinances, let us repel it with Prov. viii. 34. Deut. v. 32. and vi. 5,—7. If tempted to profane swearing, let us repel it with Exod. xx. 7. Deut. xxviii. 58, 59. Jer. iv. 2. Zech. v. 4. Matth. v. 34,—37. James v. 12. If tempted to neglect the sanctification of the Sabbath, let us repel it with Exod. xx. 8,—11. Isa. lviii. 13. and lvi. 4,—6. Neh. xiii. 15,—19. Jer. xvii. 21,—27. Ezek. xxii. 26. and xx. 13. If tempted to neglect relative duties to parents, children, &c. let us repel it with Exod. xx. 12. Matth. vii. 12. and xxii. 39. Eph. iv,—vi. Col. iii; iv. 1 Pet. ii; iii. Tit. ii; iii. Rom. xii,—xv. If tempted to pride, let us repel it with Psal. cxxxviii. 6. 1 Pet. v. 5. James iv. 6. Hab. ii. 4. Isa. ii. 11, 18. Prov. xxx. 13. and vi. 16, 17. If we are tempted to passionate anger, let us repel it with Mat. iv. 29. and v. 22,—24. Eph. iv. 26, 31, 32. Col. iii. 12, 13. John iv. 4, 9. If tempted to revenge injuries done us or others, let us repel it with Rom. xii. 19,—21. Matth. v. 44. If tempted to murder ourselves or others, let us repel it with Exod. xx. 13. 1 John iii. 13. If tempted to drunkenness, let us repel it with Luke xxi. 34. 1 Cor. vi. 9, 10. If tempted to foolish and immoderate talking, let us repel it with Psalm lxxi. 8. and xxxix. 1. Eph. v. 4. Matth. xii. 36, 37. If tempted to uncleanness, let us repel it with Exod. xx. 14. Matth. v. 28. Gal. v. 19,—21. 1 Cor. vi. 9, 10. Eph. v. 3, 5. Col. iii. 5. Heb. xiii. 4. Rev. xxi. 8. and xxii. 15. Prov. ii. 16,—19. and v. 3,—11. and vii. 10,—27. and vi. 24.—35. and ix. 13,—18. and xxii. 14. and xxiii. 27. Gen. xxxix. 9. If tempted to intimacy with foolish and wicked persons, let us repel it with Prov. ix. 6. and xiii. 20. Psalm vi. 8. 2 Cor. v. 14,—18. If tempted to

fraud or dishonesty, let us repel it with Exod. xx. 15. Zech. v. 4. Mat. vii. 12. Rom. xiii. 8. Eph. iv. 28. 1 Theff. iv. 6. If tempted to lying, let us repel it with Eph. iv. 25. Col. iii. 9. Rev. xx. 8, 27. and xxii. 15. Psalm v. 4, 5. If tempted to revile and backbite our neighbour, let us repel it with Exod. xx. 16. Lev. xix. 16, 17. Tit. iii. 2. James iv. 11. If tempted to discontentment, envy, or covetousness, let us repel it with Exod. xx. 17. Deut. xii. 28, 32. Heb. xiii. 5. Psalm xxxvii. 1—8. Job v. 2. Gal. v. 26. James iii. 14. If tempted to presumption, let us repel it with Deut. vi. 16. Psalm xcv. 9, 11. If tempted to despair, let us repel it with Isa. i. 18. and xliii. 24, 25. and xlvi. 12, 13. and lv. 7. and lvii. 17, 18. Ezek. xxxiii. 11. Heb. vii. 25. 1 John i. 7. John vi. 37. If we are tempted to sin by hopes of secrecy, let us repel it with Jer. xxiii. 24. Eccl. xii. 14. 1 Cor. iv. 5. If we be tempted by expectation of carnal pleasure, profit or honour, let us repel it with Matth. xlvii. 26. Jam. v. 1,—5. Rev. xviii. 7, 8. Rom. vi. 21. and ii. 8, 9. *

Faith, as a *shield*, is of great use, as by it we believe and improve the whole word of God in opposition to Satan's temptations ;—we embrace and improve the promises of the gospel by which we take hold of, and improve Christ's person, offices, relations, and fulness, and all the persons and perfections of God in him, for destroying the works of the devil, and by which his Spirit and strengthening and sanctifying influences are conveyed into our soul, and we are directed, animated and secured of success in our resistance of temptations, Eph. vi. 16. 1 John iii. 8. Rev. xii. 12. 2 Cor. xii. 9.—*Effectual fervent prayer and solemn fasting* are remarkably useful

* N. B. These cases and texts are only mentioned as a sample, and it is left to the reader, especially if tempted, to look them out in his Bible, where he will see the connection.

useful in our resistance of temptations, as thereby we dispirit Satan,—employ God's almighty power, infinite wisdom, and unbounded love, to limit and overrule his temptations, and to enable us to resist and overcome them, Eph. vi. 18. 19. 1 Cor. xii. 7. —9. Mat. xxvi. 41 and xvii. 21. James v. 15, 16.

(3.) In putting on, and improving this whole armour of God, we must *carefully watch* against temptation,—observing every snare which leads towards any kind of sin, whether it ly in our natural tempers, acquired habits, or outward or inward circumstances, and earnestly avoid it ;—observing the very smallest and earliest motions of every particular indwelling lust, and avoiding every occasion, employment, or company which can lead to a gratification of them ;—studying to have our souls alway impressed with a deep fixed awe of God's authority, majesty, omnipresence, power, holiness and justice, sense of his love, and relish of spiritual privileges, as a mean of fortifying them against temptations ;—and meeting every temptation with any early and accurate discernment of its nature, a deep and distinct sense of its tendency, and a vigorous cleaving by faith to the person, righteousness, Spirit, and word of Christ, and a fixed resolution to love him and live to him, Matth. xxvi. 41. Psalm xvi. 23. Gen. xxx. 9.

(4.) Being thus strong in the Lord, and using his whole armour in the most active and watchful manner ; we must give every temptation, an *immediate and resolute opposition*,—resisting the very first motions of it, and constantly and vigorously carrying on our resistance, till it be conquered. For silence or inactivity, at the first, is a degree of compliance, and encourageth Satan to carry on his attempts. And temptations being extremely infectious and captivating, they entangle our affections, and become stronger and stronger, if our resistance be delayed.—We must resist with great courage
and

and steady resolution : for thus hath God commanded, Eph. vi. 10, 11, 12. 1 Pet. ii. 9. Heb. iv. 15. and ii. 18. 1 Cor. x. 13. We cannot avoid Satan by flight, 1 Pet. v. 8. Job i. 7. and ii. 2. Our cowardice renders him more bold and vigorous in his tempting work, John iv. 7. 1 Pet. v. 9.—Under a deep sense, holy fear, and detestation of sin and care to avoid it ;—and in a thorough distrusting of all our own wisdom and strength, we, depending on Christ alone for assistance and victory,—must *persevere in striving* against every temptation, pouring an holy contempt upon every motive, or bait proposed by Satan, and earnestly endeavouring to abound in the contrary duties, Gal. vi. 9. Eph. vi. 10,—18.—Nothing less than the utmost opposition to the sin to which we are tempted, can occasion a gracious quiet of mind. Hence believers bitterly mourn over their miscarriages, wrestle against sin under most fearful discouragements,—have their conscience troubled with the very smallest sins ; and they labour to catch every advantage against them, Rom. vii. 14,—24.

When that, to which we are tempted, is doubtful with respect to its morality ;—when men are Satan's instruments in tempting us :—or when our inward corruptions have perceptibly taken part with a temptation, it may be necessary to dispute with it. But our arguments ought to be scriptural, and to be urged in the exercise of faith on the word of God.—But if we be tempted to uncleanness ;—to blasphemous thoughts ;—or to neglect of known duty ;—or to doubt of the reality of our grace ;—or, if the temptation be of a dismaying nature,—or be applied to our soul while it is dispirited with inward trouble,—we ought *carefully to avoid all disputing* with Satan,—as that might entangle our affections in a liking to the sin tempted to,—and would honour Satan, as if his purposes deserved our consideration ; and thus encourage him to proceed on
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his work ; and at last would readily issue in our falling before such an artful and impudent disputant. But we must give temptation an *immediate and flat denial* warranted by the word of God, and deep marked with our detestation of the sin, Matth. iv. 3.—10. Gen. xxxix. 9. Gal. i. 16. Psalm xlii. 11. James iv. 9. 1 Pet. v. 8, 9. Eph. vi. 12. 2 Tim. ii. 22.

CHAP. II.

Of Casuistical Hints relative to INDWELLING SIN, in its diversified LUSTS and MOTIONS, and the MANIFESTATION thereof.

THE very NATURE of men's indwelling corruption lies in fixed, permanent enmity against God, and contrariety to his law, constantly productive of actual rebellion against him. By it, every power of our soul is filled with answerable, constant incapacity for, irreconcilable aversion from, and malignant hatred of, and desperate opposition to every thing in God himself, or which bears any moral conformity to him.—This dreadful quality or disposition of our nature, in its fallen state, manifests itself, in our lothness to receive any spiritual benefit from God, or to engage in secret exercises of religion, to which we have no carnal encouragement, as self examination, spiritual meditation, or the like—in our heart's suddenly starting aside from, or wearying of them ;—in our constant inclination and pressure towards sinful thoughts, words and deeds, and readiness to be surprized into
vain

vain and wicked imaginations and desires;—and in our affections being so easily entangled in sin, and urging us to commit or continue in it.—In *unregenerate men*, it makes them rush forward in sinful courses, with fearful rage and madness, notwithstanding rational convictions of their evil and danger, and notwithstanding manifold strivings of God's Spirit and providence to prevent them.—In *believers*, it rebels against the general purpose and bias of their implanted habits of grace, and every particular duty of religion,—and by prevailing against their gracious inclinations, resolutions, and endeavours, it leads them captive to its own interests.

This indwelling enmity of men's heart against God, is called a *law of sin*, because deriving a power and authority over them, from the curse of the broken covenant of works on the one hand, and from their own voluntary choice of it, and submission to it, on the other,—it binds them over to commit sinful thoughts, words and actions; and enforceth their so doing, by a sanction of carnal pleasures, profits, and honours annexed to compliance; and of apparent trouble and dishonour annexed to non-compliance.—This law of sin, dwelling in men's heart, and never absent from them, mingles and manifests itself in every thought, word, and deed, operates in the easiest manner, and determines them to follow its dictates, with constancy and pleasure, in so far as any of them is not regenerated by the Spirit of God.—It renders their heart *unsearchably deep*, that God alone can fully observe and comprehend all its diversified methods of contriving, bringing forth, and protecting actual sin,—*deceitful above all things*, abounding in infernal arts and devices unnumbered, and even contrary like motions,—and *desperately wicked*, never satisfied with its degrees of sinful inclinations, or number and aggravation of sinful acts,—nor restrainable from actual transgressions

transgressions by engagements, mercies or judgments, Rom. viii. 2, 7, 8. and vii. 23, 24, 25. Jer. xvii. 9, 10.

The two leading properties of indwelling sin are, its *deceitfulness*, and *mighty power*. It manifests its DECEITFULNESS in alway interesting men's self in all its projects, that it may the more easily succeed;—in intermitting its sensible influence, or altering the form of it, that they may think themselves under the power of no particular lust;—in assuming an appearance of the graces of God's Spirit,—and persuading men that it is real grace;—in improving the free favour of God manifested in the gospel to persuade men, That pardon, regeneration, and eternal happiness may be easily obtained,—that an habitual bent of their heart towards Christ and holiness is not necessary to, or in, salvation,—or that their failings are less criminal than those of some distinguished saints;—in diverting our mind from proper attachment to spiritual things, by pushing us to other things which are lawful, or even religious in themselves;—in diverting us from present duty, and even from habitual contemplation and improvement of God's perfections and work of redemption;—in leading men to a presumptuous and natural exercise of faith, in order to divert from all concern about true faith, or so much as a suspicion that they want it;—in representing that important and sin ruining exercise of prayer, as mean, tiresome, interfering with other necessary duties, or the present omission of which may be balanced with itself, or some other religious exercises,—and thus diverting us from it, or rendering us careless and lifeless in it;—in improving every opportunity of exerting its influence, and in directing it in the manner and form in which it is most likely to succeed;—in prompting us to rest in mere generals, as, That we have true faith, and chiefly aim at the glory of God, though we do not endeavour to exercise faith, and aim at the

glory of God, in every particular action;—in making us propose the satisfaction of our own minds, and the esteem of others, as one great end, in our religious exercises;—in making us rest contented with a mere performance of duties without regard to our state, principles, motives, manner, or ends in it;—in rendering us regardless and unwatchful with respect to the first motions of our indwelling lusts, and with respect to more secret and sudden temptations to sin;—in rendering our minds sluggish and inattentive in our consideration of the holiness, omniscience, omnipresence, and authority of God, and of his love, wisdom, power, equity and faithfulness, manifested in the work of redemption,—or in viewing the nature and punishment of sin, and how the Holy Ghost is grieved by our indulgence of it;—in rendering our mind inadvertant to spiritual things, and strongly disposed to rest in faint and fruitless attempts towards recovery from spiritual deadness and backsliding, especially if great difficulties appear in our way;—in making men believe, That conscientious conduct is stiffness,—that sins are duties, and duties sins,—imprudence and passion fervent zeal for God;—and thus making them glory in sin or in their suffering for its sake;—in inextricably warping and entangling their mind in ignorance, confusion and error, or rendering it extremely acute and ready in finding out excuses for, and extenuation of sin, or objections against the truth of God, or their own spiritual edification;—in strangely hiding the nature, facts and aggravations of their sin, and the shame and danger which attend it;—and representing profits, pleasures, and honours, as attending the commission of sinful acts, so as to entangle the affections to a liking of them, and the fancy into polluting imaginations of them, and approaches to them, Heb. iii. 13. Jer. xvii. 9.

The MIGHTY POWER of indwelling sin manifests itself in pushing men to the most unprofitable wickedness,

edness, as blasphemy of God ; or, the most unnatural wickedness, self murder, hatred, and murder of near relations ; horrid uncleannels, savage cruelty, or the like :—or to shun believing in Christ, when the convictions and allurements of the Spirit of God peculiarly shut them up to it, and recommend it, as necessary, profitable, and honourable ;—in making men apostatize from the truths of the gospel, after they have had clear and extensive discoveries of their divine authority, and experience of their power on their souls,—and after they have suffered almost unto death for their sake ;—in improving men's strongest legal convictions of sin to irritate their hearts to more ungodliness,—and all their legal resolutions against sin or severe mortifications of it, to increase its inward strength in them ;—in making sin sometimes peculiarly abound, where laws, punishments, care of magistrates, ministers, parents, and masters seem remarkably calculated to prevent it ;—in rendering some men, and even such as enjoy remarkable means to the contrary, absolute monsters of open wickedness ;—in the fearful outbreaks of eminent saints in opposition to their strongest graces, or after they have enjoyed the most familiar fellowship with God ;—in robbing some saints of much of that grace and holiness, which they had once attained,—notwithstanding the pleasure they felt in it, and their still enjoying the sanctifying oracles, ordinances and influences of Christ, 2 Kings xiii. Deut. xviii ; xx. 2 Sam. xi ; xii. 1 Kings xi. 2 Chron. xvi. Matth. xxvi, 69,—74, Rev. ii, 5.

Indwelling sin, in the exertion of its deceitfulness and power, *weakens the implanted graces* of believers, —by rendering them slothful in the exercise of these graces, particularly faith and repentance ;—by rendering them legal, formal and weary in the contemplation of, or search after spiritual things ;—by filling their mind with false and foolish opinions, and their heart with carnal cares ;—by making them un-

watchful against temptations ;—by diverting them from a thorough repentance of such horrible sins as ly on their conscience ;—by making them improve the examples of other professors of religion to encourage or harden themselves in sin, and make progress in it ;—by making them cherish some particular lust, or live without real, lively, or familiar fellowship with God, in particular duties of religion ;—by pushing them into a love of, and deep intermeddling with carnal politics,—particularly in religious concerns ; or making them study a remarkable growth in knowledge, without an answerable growth in holy and heavenly conversation, Jam. i. 23, 24. 2 John 8. 1 Pet. v. 8, 9. Isa. xliii. 22. 1 Cor. viii. 1. Isa. xlvii. 10. Psal. xxxviii. 5. and lxvi. 18.

The deceitfulness and power of indwelling sin peculiarly appears, WHEN men have been long accustomed to a sinful course ; when some darling idol is struck at by the Spirit or providence of God ; when men are very indisposed to religious duties ; when Satan and his instruments strongly tempt to sinful acts ; when men are called to self-denying duties, which expose them to hatred, shame, reproach, —as patient bearing of injuries, bold confession of Christ's truths amidst furious persecutors, or ready confession of their own faults, or giving faithful reproofs to great men, on whom they much depend ; when one is peculiarly pressed to make the spiritual part of religious duties his great business, and yet put no confidence in them ; or, when he labours to have constant freedom from the yoke of sin, and habitual delectation in God, Jer. xlii. 23. Matth. xxiii. 26, 27. and xix. 21, 22. and xxvi. 40, 69.—74.

II. By the residence and agency of indwelling sin in men's heart, SPIRITUAL PLAGUES almost innumerable are there formed, some of which are properly *sinful lusts*, which constantly tend toward, and promote

promote acts of sin, and others are the immediate productions of these indwelling lusts, 1 Kings viii. 38. Mat. xv. 19. The principal of these spiritual plagues are,

(1.) **ATHEISM**, which manifests itself in men's readiness to doubt of God's existence, perfections, or providence,—or to wish there were not a God, at least none omniscient, infinitely holy, just and true ;—in their readiness to conceive or entertain harsh thoughts of God ;—in their readiness to doubt of the divine inspiration and authority of the scriptures ;—in their reading his word, and observing his works of creation and providence without seeing God in them, or hearing their voice ;—in their delightful indulgence of sin, and doing that in secret of which they would be ashamed before men, Psal. xiv. 1. and x. 4, 5, 13. Ezek. viii. 12. and ix. 9.

(2.) **IGNORANCE**, manifested in men's inattention to, unaquaintance with, and mistakes concerning these things which are most near and most important to them, such as the worth of their soul ;—the guilt, pollution and weakness of their heart ;—the nature, number, aggravations and danger of their sin ;—the nature, glory and work of the divine persons ;—the person, offices, states, relations, and work of Christ ;—the origin, parties, condition, promised blessings and administration of the covenant of grace ;—the true state and condition of their soul before God,—whether united to Christ, justified by his blood, and renewed by his Spirit ;—and whether their grace, or spiritual experience be true or counterfeit, weak or strong, growing or decreasing ;—or what are the most proper medicines or means of holiness for their soul,—or what is their duty in particular cases, Isa. xxvii. 11. and i. 3.

(3.) **STUPIDITY** manifested in men's strange unconcern about spiritual, eternal, and divine things, when they think, speak, or hear of them ;—in their

not

not searching the words and works of God, in order to know his mind and will ;—in their pleasing themselves with shadows without substance, and speaking peace to themselves while God speaks, or inflicts indignation and wrath ;—in their living careless in an unregenerate state, or under the hidings of his face and tokens of his anger ;—in their continuing unaffected under gospel ordinances, offers, and invitations, kind providences, or heavy judgments, or awful threatenings ;—in their continued unconcern about death, judgment, eternity, heaven and hell, while their friends and neighbours all around them are dying daily, Isa. xlii. 25.

(4.) **FORGETFULNESS** of God manifested in men's living so much without thinking on his nature, persons, perfections, words and works, chiefly of redemption ;—in their bestowing so few and so unfixed thoughts upon divine things, while they bestow so many, so fixed, and so affected ones, upon the things of this world ;—in their neglect of meditation, secret prayer, self examination, and like ordinances, which are peculiarly calculated for promoting habitual or familiar fellowship with God,—or neglect of proper preparation for attendance at, or improvement of his ordinances ;—in their living unimpressed with his marvellous words or mighty works, or quickly losing the impressions which they had received ;—in their not asking and waiting for his counsel in all their enterprizes ;—in their neglect of sympathizing with, and communicating to his poor saints for his sake, Jerem. ii. 32. Deuter. xxxii. 18.

(5.) **SELFISHNESS**, which appears in men's neglect of relative duties to others, while they hold them bound to perform theirs to themselves ;—in their hiding, excusing and extenuating their own sins, while they publish and aggravate those of others ;—in their taking pleasure in the fall or misery of others, if it tend to their own vindication and honour ;

honour;—in their aiming at, and seeking after their own honour, profit, and pleasure, at the expence of dishonouring God, and injuring their neighbour;—in their being more affected with reproaches and injuries done to themselves, than with those done to their more valuable neighbours, or even with the profanation of God's name or Sabbath, rebellion against his law, contempt or perversion of his truth;—in their valuing and commending themselves, and wishing to be esteemed and praised by others, as more learned, wise, laborious, or holy than others;—in their especial care to perform such duties as bring honour to themselves;—in their grudging, when others rival or outvie them, or their friends, in fame, honour, power, or prosperity;—in their attending upon God's ordinances to promote their own spiritual comfort, rather than the glory of God;—in their contenting themselves with such duties and degrees of religion, as they think necessary to secure their own spiritual edification and eternal happiness, without regarding the public honour of Jesus Christ, and real edification of their neighbours, Hof. x. 1. Zech. vii. 5. Mat. xvi. 24. Phil. ii. 21.

(6.) **PRIDE**, which manifests itself in the great pains which men take to render their bodies handsome and beautiful, and to make themselves thought mannerly, rich, powerful, benevolent, learned, or wise;—in their unnecessary commending of themselves or friends, and taking pleasure in being commended, or even flattered by others;—in their readiness to detract from the honour of such as appear their rivals or superiors, concealing or lessening their excellencies, and publishing and aggravating their real faults; in their taking much diversified and sinful pains to accomplish their own projects; in their taking so much pleasure in prosperity; in their living above their incomes, and using fraudulent and other sinful methods to support their outward grandeur,

deur, honour or pleasure; and in their grief, shame and murmuring when God's providence reduceth them to distress and poverty; and in their uneasiness under the injuries which they receive, and eagerness to vindicate themselves at the expence of the peace of the church, and of injuring others;—in their boasting of gifts, graces and works, not really their own;—and especially in their want of humble reverence of God, aversion to submit to his laws, and be eternal debtors to his free grace for their whole salvation,—or to submit to Christ's person as their head, husband and lord, or to his obedience and suffering, as their justifying righteousness;—in trusting to their own wisdom to direct, and their strength to enable them to perform their duty, even after they have had sufficient evidences of their insufficiency,—and in trusting to their own righteousness to recommend them to the favour of God, *Psal. cxxxviii. 6. Hab. ii. 4. Rom. iii. 3. Jer. ii. 31.*

(7.) **LEGALITY**, which appears in men's expecting of eternal happiness by their own good works, even where they have scarce the appearance of any;—in their running to resolutions and performance of duties for relief of their conscience when it is under conviction;—in their serving God, in order that he may accept their persons, and save them;—in their attempting to receive Christ by believing in their own strength, and rest in him and his righteousness, because of some sensibility, sincerity, or other good thing in themselves;—in their inclination to trust in their own righteousness along with that of Christ;—in their putting off their return to him after any remarkable fall into sin, till they have got themselves wrought into a better frame;—in their spiritual comfort ebbing and flowing, just as they apprehend their frame or conduct is worse or better;—in their giving up with their assurance of their interest in Christ, because of particu-
lar challenges

lenges of conscience, or prevalency of particular lusts ; in their peace of conscience being marred by discoveries of their imperfection in holiness ; in their faith being discouraged by the felt power of sin ; in their trusting to their sensible discoveries of inward habits or exercise of grace ;—in their dependence on gospel ordinances, or the lively administration of them, for success ;—in their having more freedom to commit sin after they have performed religious duties ;—in their fretting, that they have not as remarkable gifts and graces as others ;—in their living much under the power of inward discouragements, notwithstanding their union to Christ as their head, Rom ix. 31, 32. and x. 3.

(8.) **UNBELIEF**, which appears in men's inattention to the truths of God as revealed in his word, —or to his authority and faithfulness as stamped by himself therein ;—in their not crediting his laws, and particularly applying them to their conscience for convincing them of their sins, their state and condition ;—in their disregarding the doctrines, promises, and invitations of the gospel, and in their refusing or neglecting to make particular application of Christ's person, righteousness and salvation, therein offered by God to them, answerably to their particular ignorance, guilt, pollution, and bondage ; and in their improving either the greatness or the smallness of their sins, as an argument against their present embracement of him, as God's free gift to them for wisdom, righteousness, sanctification, and redemption, Heb. iii. 12,—14. and iv. 11. John xvi. 9.

(9.) **HATRED OF GOD**, manifested in men's estrangement from thinking or speaking of, or to God ; or thinking or speaking of them, without pleasure and delight ;—in their undervaluing or shifting familiar fellowship with him in his ordinances ;—in their contempt of, or opposition to his oracles and ordinances ; in their disobedience to his

law, refusal of his gospel offers, resisting, grieving, quenching, and doing despite to his Spirit of grace ;—in their neglect of his worship, or the right performance of it ; in their profanation of his name, or taking pleasure to hear others profane it ;—in their murmuring at the dispensations of his providence, Rom. i. 30. and viii. 7. Eph. iv. 17,—19.

(10.) A BLASPHEMOUS DISPOSITION, which manifests itself in men's readiness to conceive unworthy and unbecoming thoughts of God, as if he were like themselves,—were corporeal in his nature,—saw not all things,—were unconcerned how men acted or did approve their sin,—would not fulfil his promise, though they trusted in it,—or execute his threatenings, though they continued in sin,—or as if he delighted in their affliction and misery ;—and in their not esteeming him worthy to be their *chief good*, and the *alone portion* of their soul ;—in the slight impressions they have of oaths sworn by him, or vows made to him ;—in their irreverent, lifeless, and drowsy attendance on his instituted ordinances ; in their unholy and irreverent use of his words, and works, without viewing or sanctifying him in them ;—or, in their readiness to, or delight in sinful cursing and swearing, playing at cards or dice, using of charms, or to mock at the ordinances and people of God, or the working of his Spirit, Mat. xv. 19. Isa. lii. 5. Malach. ii. 17. and i. 12. and iii. 13, 14.

(11.) PROFANE LEVITY of mind, which appears in men's rushing into the presence of God, as if he were their equal or inferior ;—in their readiness to attend to, or gaze on external or even trifling objects, while they are professedly sited in the presence of God ;—in the astonishing inconstancy of their thoughts on the Lord's day, or when they are employed in his worship ; in the frequent unnecessary and sinful changing of their religious resolutions ;—in their slight impression or sudden forgetfulness

fulness of their solemn vows ;—in the strange roving of their mind under affliction, and ready turning of their fancy and heart to meet with temptations, Zeph. iii. 4. Psal. lxxviii. 37, 57.

(12.) AN UNGRATEFUL DISPOSITION, which manifests itself in men's not observing, pondering, and firmly remembering the gracious promises and merciful providences of God ; in their remembering with more seriousness the painful affliction they have endured, than their mercies received or promised ; in their neglect of solemn thanksgiving to God for his favours, and not walking worthy of them, by abounding in good works ;—in their neglecting to improve past deliverances and mercies ; in seeking, hoping and waiting for such as are necessary in time to come, Rom. i. 21. 2 Tim. iii. 2, Rom. ii. 4, 5, 2 Chron. xxxii. 25.

(13.) AN IDOLATROUS DISPOSITION, which appears in men's idolizing almost every creature they have any connection with ;—in their fancying creatures which never existed, in order to make idols of them ;—in their immoderate esteem, desire, delight, reverence of, and trust in themselves, or their endowments, relations, concerns and enjoyments ;—in their immoderate grief and vexation, when God, in his providence, destroys or deprives them of any beloved objects ; in their readiness to set up other idols, at least in their heart, when God, in his providence, takes away any ;—in their idolizing not only trifling or imaginary things, but even the very worst of things, as wicked persons, devils, or indwelling lusts ;—in their idolizing the ordinances of the gospel, manifestations of Christ and implanted graces, which God bestows for the restraining of idolatry ;—in their grudging no labour or expence in serving their idols and cleaving to them, notwithstanding the most express reproofs and commands of God, and notwithstanding severe corrections, sharp convictions, and contrary vows ; and in their de-

lighting in them, even when in the immediate presence of God, and professedly worshipping of him, Matth. xv. 19.

(14.) A SUPERSTITIOUS-INCLINATION, which discovers itself in men's fondness to model the ordinances of Jesus Christ to their own carnal taste ; in their esteeming them according to the outward finery of the administration ; in their readiness to part with, add to, or take from them ; and in their violent and lasting, however unreasonable, attachment to religious institutions of human, especially their own, invention, Acts xvii. 22. Col. ii. 23.

(15.) DISSIMULATION OR HYPOCRISY, which appears in men's readiness to aim at a form of godliness, without regarding the power of it ; or, to exclaim against the faults of others, while their own are as bad, if not worse ;—in their pretending to great strictness and zeal, while they indulge themselves in an untender practice, or to mourn over, and witness against sins, with which their hearts were never burdened before the Lord ;—in their professing an high regard for the truths of God, while they take no due pains to train up their children or servants in them ; in their drawing near to God with their outward man, while their heart is far from him ; in praying to, praising or thanking God, confessing sin, solemnly vowing or fasting, without any inward seriousness or frame of heart answerable to their exercise, but the reverse ;—in their yielding a rational assent to his doctrines, laws, promises and threatenings, while in heart they neither believe nor love any of them ; in their readiness to receive a fancied Christ, in their imaginations or affections, while they profess to receive the true ONE into their hearts ; in their apparently serious hearing of the gospel, while their heart roves after the things of this world ;—in their appearing serious and devout in the presence of the godly, but light and

and loose in the company of others ;—in their pretending esteem of, and love to persons whom they really despise and hate, and even revile and defame behind their backs ; in their making promises which they never really intend to perform ; in their doing good to others from bad motives or ends ;—in their dispraising themselves, in order to cause others value and commend them ; or, in doing good works that they may be seen of men, Matth. vi. 2, 3. and vii. 2, 3. and xxiii.

(16.) **CARELESSNESS**, manifested in men's confused and slothful management of their temporal or spiritual concerns ; in their easiness of mind while they approach God's ordinances, without proper preparation, attend on them without proper affection, and depart from them without spiritual advantage ; in their heart being strangely unaffected, while they have a rational perception that God is absent from, or frowns on them ;—in their unconcern about the removal of their spiritual maladies, while they have a rational conviction of their dreadful nature, and of their being infected with them ;—in their want of a lively concern to receive Jesus Christ and his salvation, notwithstanding their having a clear rational persuasion of their excellency, suitableness, necessity, and being freely offered to them in a gospel, Mat. xx. 6.

(17.) **LUKEWARMNESS**, manifested in men's resting satisfied with a mere, or even a scanty profession of religion, without a real change of their state, nature and practice ; in their aversion to expose themselves to any shame, reproach, or suffering for the sake of divine truths ; in their indifference about the public or private interest of religion in the church, if their own prosper ; in their unconcern about promoting the glory of Christ, success of the gospel and edification of souls in distant places and future ages ;—in their being lightly affected with the injuries done

done to Jesus Christ and his cause, by themselves and others, Rev. iii. 15, 16.

(18.) **CARNALITY OR WORLDLY MINDEDNESS**, manifested in the multitude of men's vain thoughts, words and actions, which in no wise tend to promote the glory of God, or spiritual welfare of souls; in their employing so many thoughts, words and deeds about the concerns of this world, while they bestow so few on spiritual and eternal things;—in their occupying the best of their time in thoughts, words and actions about the affairs of this life;—in their proneness to, and pleasure in such work, and even robbing God of proper time or frame for his worship, on account of it, while their thoughts, words and works relative to spiritual things are unready, unfixed, unpleasant, and easily shifted; in the peculiar proneness of their heart to carnal and vain thoughts on the Lord's day, or while they attend the ordinances of his worship;—in their carnal thoughts so captivating their minds and affections, while they are reading or hearing God's word, partaking of the sacraments, or the like, that they scarcely retain a rational sense of what they are about;—in their quickly forgetting spiritual things, while the things of this world, however vain and trifling, are long and tenaciously remembered;—in their quickly wearying of the easiest exercises of religion, as praising of God, or the like, while they long, stedfastly, and with pleasure persevere in the most toilsome worldly labours;—in their especial wearying of the more spiritual and heavenly exercises of God's worship, such as meditation, self examination, singing of psalms, partaking of the Lord's supper, or the like: and in their so much performing religious exercises from carnal principles, motives and ends, Rom. vii. 14. and viii. 5, 6. 1 Cor. iii. 1.

(19.) **A MALICIOUS AND MURDEROUS DISPOSITION**, manifested in the frequent raging of men's heart against God, or profanation of his name, without

without any provocation from him, or profit to themselves; in the ready and frequent eruptions of their angry passion against men;—in their envying the gifts and graces of others, even their chief friends: in their readiness to revenge injuries, and even to delight in that dishonouring of God, which tends to the infamy or hurt of such as have injured them, or rival or outvie them in prosperity or honour;—in their lasting remembrance, and frequent and fixed consideration of injuries done them;—in their want of tender compassion towards enemies, or even neighbours, friends and relations, who are under distress, and not laying hold on opportunities of rendering good for evil;—in their angry and outrageous speeches, or even terrible curses and imprecations against others, even without much provocation;—in their seeking the hurt of such as profess kindness to them, or that have heaped favours upon them;—in their being easily provoked to harass, beat, kill, or make war upon others, and that in a cruel and barbarous manner;—in their adopting cruelties to men, or other animals, or the representations thereof, into such multitudes of their diversions, honours, or even pretended religion, Tit. iii. 3.

(20.) A LUXURIOUS and UNCHASTE DISPOSITION, which manifests itself in the pleasure that many take in thinking, speaking or partaking of what they account delicate food, rather than of Jesus Christ and his fulness;—in their fondness to exceed the cravings of nature and their incomes in the measure, kind, or delicacy of their provision;—in their taking pleasure to spend much precious time in their eating and drinking, till they have crammed their belly, rendered their body unactive, and their mind stupid, disordered, or furious;—in their readiness to enter into temptations to uncleanness,—frequenting lewd, frothy, or vain companions,—addicting themselves to, or cordially relishing foolish

foolish or immodest jests ;—in their taking pleasure to read or hear impure songs, or romances,—or to behold immodest pictures ;—in their intermixing something frothy or obscene with so many of their diversions, and even with their pretended devotions ; in their readiness to indulge themselves in unchaste imaginations, or to have their affections entangled, if obscene things be any way represented, Col. iii. 5. Eph. v. 3, 4, 5.

(21.) **AN INCLINATION TO LYING and DEFA-
MATION**, which appears in men's taking such pleasure in reading and hearing or relating that which is marvellous and scarcely credible ;—in their readiness to represent matters otherwise than their information warranted them ;—in the ready and ingenious manner in which they invent or dress up falsehood, to entertain their friends, vindicate or excuse themselves, or reproach their neighbour ;—in their making the defamation of others a principal part of their converse ; in their readiness to receive false or bad reports,—and their aversion or unconcern to spread just refutations thereof, or bring calumniators to repentance and shame, censure or punishment, Psalm lviii. 3. and lxxiii. 4. and lvii. 4. and x. 7.

(22.) **A DISCONTENTED, COVETOUS, THIEF-
VISH DISPOSITION**, which manifests itself in men's almost universal and constant dissatisfaction with their particular and present lot, and wishing some alterations in it ;—in the covetous cares of this world so filling their heart, while they are outwardly employed in worshipping God,—and so swallowing up their attention and care for the one thing needful ;—in their submitting to the most base or sinful means of obtaining that which they covet ;—in the constancy and ardour of their desires after the things of this world, even under old age and trouble ;—in their rebellion against God's law, and apostasy from his truths and cause, even in opposition

sion to the convictions of their own conscience and at the expence of the damnation of their soul,—for the sake of some temporal advantage.

III. Though all men be in different degrees infected with all the above mentioned plagues, yet, in respect of their inward MOTIONS, one or a few lusts chiefly prevail in one man at once ;—and which, on that account, are called **PREDOMINANT**, as they direct and govern the motions of the rest,—That lust, of which the operation most readily distracts men in religious duties, or which most frequently instigates them, when they are alone ; or which, and its effects, they are most ready to excuse and extenuate, at least in their own mind ; and with which they are most averse to part ; and which most easily, frequently, and powerfully determines them to corresponding thoughts, words or deeds,—appears to be the predominant one, Heb. xii. 1. Psal. xviii. 23.—Nevertheless, sinful lusts often *predomine by turns* in the same person, as age, station, opportunities, or temptations answer.—And sometimes several lusts, as it were, concur to solicit us to actual sin ; and hence, it becomes very difficult to know, which ought to be chiefly watched against and resisted.

The immediate tendency of all the motions and operations of men's inward lusts is to make them commit actual transgressions. But their ultimate tendency is to retain and reduce them under the power and dominion of *indwelling sin* in general, Prov. v. 22. Rom. vii. 23. Every actual sin naturally conduceth hereto, as it gives Satan a complete victory,—strengthens the inward habit or root of sin,—invigorates all its lusts or members,—hardens the heart in sin,—spreads the infection to the body,—provokes God to inflict spiritual plagues,—discourageth men from applications to him for his sanctifying grace,—leads them out to fret against him,

—and in fine spreads the defilement to others around, James i. 14, 15. Jer. xiii. 23. Heb. iii. 13. Jer. vi. 15. Psalm lxxxi. 11,—13. 2 Cor. xvii. 1. Hos. vii. 1. Ezra ix. 10. Prov. xix. 3. 1 Cor. xv. 33. Heb. xii. 15.

Men's indwelling lusts *especially exert their crafty and powerful motions, in conceiving and bringing forth actual sin*,—WHEN the Holy Ghost applieth the law of God most powerfully and closely to their conscience, or allures them towards Christ by common spiritual comforts :—When they are called to singular holiness and purity :—When they are plainly and vehemently urged to part with some darling lusts :—When they have been long accustomed to the practice of correspondent acts of sin :—When their soul is under some remarkable slumber or drowsiness :—When Satan hath carried his temptations to an especial height :—When heavy troubles are inflicted, or difficult duties required and urged :—Or, when the light of the gospel shines most clearly and Jesus Christ and his salvation are most earnestly offered, Rom. vii. 8,—13.

Even when an actual sin is conceived in the heart by an inward liking to it,—a considering whether it may be committed,—a purposing to commit it,—and a consulting and fixing on the most proper means and circumstances for that end,—God sometimes STIFLES it in the birth,—by taking away the life or power of him who had intended it, or laying outward hindrances in his way ;—by cutting off or removing the objects of it ;—by diverting the intender's thoughts from it to something else, or convincing him of the difficulty, danger, dishonesty, and unprofitableness of it ;—or, by converting or reviving influences of his Spirit, makes him hate and abhor it, Exod. xv. 9, 14. 1 Kings xiii. 4. 1 Sam. xiv. 45. Acts xii. 11. Gen. xxxvii. 24. and xxxiii. 10. Mat. xiv. 5. Rom. ii. 14, 15. Gen. xxxvii. 26. Acts xxvi. 9,—12. 1 Cor. x. 13.—In love to their souls,

God

God sometimes takes away believers by death from great temptations, which they could not withstand,—or from finishing sinful courses which they had begun; or takes away their power of fulfilling some sinful purpose: But most frequently he stifles the birth of actual sin in them by making his grace sufficient for them, 2 Cor. xii. 7,—9.

IV. Men's duty with respect to their indwelling lusts, is, through the assistance of God's Spirit, to WAR against and MORTIFY them, Rom. viii. 13. Gal. v. 17, 24.—*No unregenerate men can, in any degree, mortify their own sinful lusts*, as they are not united to Jesus Christ the Saviour from sin, who was manifested to destroy the works of the devil;—they are under the law as a broken covenant of works, which is the strength of sin; and hence their consciences are not purged from dead works by the blood of Christ;—they have no inward habit or principle of implanted grace to oppose sin;—their lusts enjoy their full strength in and dominion over them:—Moreover, both Satan and their lusts act exceeding craftily, in enticing them to sinful acts:—their ignorance of sin, and love to it, and its suitability to their nature; their or others prosperity in sin, and their inclination to abuse the grace of God into licentiousness, fortify the interests of sin in them.—God himself also, to punish them for former sins, particularly such as were committed against light and love,—or to punish others by them,—or to prepare illustrious occasions of displaying the exceeding riches of his grace, and for other holy and wise ends, often gives them up to their own lusts, James i. 14. Rom. v. 20.—Hence, most unregenerate men have the *most glaring marks of a total want of all mortification of sin*. They take an habitual pleasure in entertaining and committing sin; they stir up their hearts to commit it; they take much pains to provide objects and opportunities for

the gratification of their lusts ;—they rush into the commission of sin upon very small temptations ; or even solicit temptations :—they sin against light without fear or shame :—they improve both mercies and judgments, as incentives to actual sin :—and take pleasure to fall under a seeming necessity of sinning, Eph. iv. 19. Prov. i. 12,—18. and vi. 3, 26, 28. Isa. v. 18. and xxii. 12, 13.

But many unregenerate men have some RESEMBLANCES of mortification. They have a clear rational persuasion of the evil nature and fruits of sin :—the motions of indwelling sin in them are so languid as to be little felt :—they carefully abstain from outward acts of sin :—indwelling sin, as it were, sleeps in them.—Through the alteration of their bodily constitution, particular lusts, as it were, die in them of their own accord. Afflictions, death of friends, or strong convictions produce an abhorrence of, or occasional victory over some particular lust. The influence of their inward corruption is diverted into some more hidden channel. Being influenced by the bias of their natural temper, the force of their legal convictions, and the fear of shame and danger,—they, as it were, war against and oppose,—not *all*, but *some* particular lusts,—and that *only by fits and starts*,—and especially in order to *restrain gross acts of sin* ;—and all is done in their own strength ;—and the conflict is properly between their understanding or conscience on the one hand, and their will and affections on the other.—But, in true mortification, the several implanted graces of believers, in all the different powers of their souls oppose the contrary remains of corruption there : they war against, and labour to mortify sinful corruption in its very root, and in its most hidden, spiritual, and once beloved forms ;—and, from a principle of faith in Christ, love to God, and sense of his redeeming love to them, and deep impressi-
of

of the authority and obligation of his holy, just and good law on them, —and from a principle of deep rooted hatred of sin, as a thing contrary to the holy nature, law and gospel of God, and infinitely defiling to their souls. They labour to promote the utter destruction of indwelling sin, resting satisfied with nothing short of perfect holiness in heart and life,—directed to the glory of God as their chief end, Rom. vii. 14,—25. 2 Cor. v. 4, 14. Rom. vi. 14 and viii. 2, 13. Matth. v. 48. Col. iii. 5. John xvi. 9. Zech. xii. 10. Psal. xix. 12. Ezek. xx. 43. 1 Theff. v. 22. Heb. iii. 12, 13. Phil. iii. 3, 8,—14. 1 John iii. 3, 9. and ii. 6, 29. 1 Pet. iv. 11. 1 Cor. x. 31.

TRUE MORTIFICATION of sin includes (1.) A *weakening of the root or whole body of indwelling corruption*, that it cannot entice, excite or urge to the commission of sinful acts; nor tumultuate, rage, and disquiet the soul with such violence, frequency and ease as formerly, Rom. vii. 24. 2 Cor. vii. 1. (2.) An *inward dying to the love of the whole body of sin*, and all its particular and especially once beloved lusts,—our inclination to, and pleasure in them gradually lessening, and as it were turning into a detestation and hatred of them, Rom. vii. 14,—24. In this death to sin, there is included a dying to those things that minister occasions of agency to our indwelling lusts,—particularly to the world and its diversified enjoyments,—as our supreme good, or any part of it,—as separated from God, and not leading to him,—as opposing and hindering the reception of him into our heart, and our service of him,—as necessary in itself, or as affording occasions and fuel to our lusts. In all these views, it must be undervalued, distrusted, disliked, watched against and opposed, as a thing empty and vain in itself,—as the ordinary portion of wicked men,—as a remarkable source of mischief to souls, and as the vanquished

quished enemy of Jesus Christ, Gal. vi. 14. John v. 4. Luke xii. 19. and xxi. 34. Zech. vii. 7. Hos. iv. 4. Psal. lxxiii. 26. Eccl. i. 2. Psal. lxii. 8, 9. and xvii. 14. 1 Tim. vi. 19. James iv. 4. 1 John ii. 15, —17. Gal. i. 4. John xvi. 33.—In it there is also included a dying to SELF in all its innumerable and bewitching appearances,—to our natural apprehensions, inclinations, abilities, accomplishments,—and enjoyments of honour, pleasure, or wealth ;—to our relations and friends ;—to our acquired, or divinely bestowed excellencies, gifts, graces, spiritual comforts,—never allowing ourselves to be directed by them as our rule, depend on them as our strength, or as any ground of acceptance with God, or of our right or access to Christ as a Saviour,—or to desire after or delight in them as the portion of our soul. Matth. xvi. 24. (3.) *Warlike conflicting with, and opposing of sin*, steadily looking on our indwelling sin and all its lusts, particularly predominant and beloved lusts, as the worst enemy of God our Saviour, and of our soul ; carefully searching and observing its motions and wiles, and how it obtained its former success against us ;—and quickly, earnestly, and by faith opposing to it, even in its very first motions, the word, Spirit, blood and grace of Christ, as the most effectual means of destroying it, Gal. v. 17, 24. Rom. vii. 23.—25. (4.) *Obtaining of success against sin*, not in mere preventing of sinful acts, but in bringing sin, in all its forms, particularly its permanent lusts, to the law of God and dying love of Christ, and thereby condemning it, and kindling our hatred against it, so as not only to prevent its acts, but to overcome and weaken its force and violence, in enticing to such acts, Gal. v. 24. Rom. vi. 6.

God doth not *always* grant *believers* success in their conflicts with indwelling sin ; but, To correct their former indulgence of it, or former acts of sin or dalliance with motions or temptations to them ;—to
restrain

restrain their pride, carnal security and self-confidence ;—to stir them up to watchfulness and dependence on Christ alone ; and to exalt the riches of his grace in forgiving their sins, and subduing their lusts,—he permits it to *prevail and rage much* in them. Moreover, their neglect of self-examination, spiritual vigilance, fervent prayers, and earnest, and frequent, and close application of Jesus' righteousness and strength ;—their neglect or delay to wash themselves in his blood, and to exercise bitter repentance, after particular falls into sin :—their attempting to oppose it in their own strength, and with carnal considerations ; and, in fine, the entanglement of their affections in the cares of this world, fearfully contribute to hinder their success, Mark xiv. 38. 2 Cor. xii. 7. Eph. vi. 10,—18. Mat. xxvi. 33. 2 Tim. ii. 1, 4.

Though, through believers spiritual union to Jesus Christ, their deliverance from the curse of the broken law, which is the strength of sin, and the translation of it upon their lusts,—and through their justifying sentence engaging all the divine persons and perfections to promote their sanctification, as a leading part of that eternal life to which they are adjudged,—and through the presence, blood, Spirit, and grace of Jesus Christ in their heart,—their indwelling lusts be *totally deprived of dominion* over them, and of much of their wonted influence and strength,—yet, through the answerableness of their bodily constitution, and their diversified stations, opportunities and temptations, their indwelling lusts often become *more violent and active* in promoting sinful acts than before their regeneration.—Believers spiritual light, watchfulness, and sense of their corruptions also make them often think them more strong and lively, when they are really become more weak, Rom. vii. 14,—24.

The sinful corruption which remains in believers, if permitted by God to prevail, can draw them into
murder,

murder, adultery, blasphemy, solemn renunciation of divine truths, hatred and persecution of fellow saints and faithful ministers; rebellion against light and love, afflictions, warnings, convictions, resolutions, and solemn vows; impenitence and obduracy under fearful guilt for a time; and, in fine, to every degree of wickedness,—the blasphemy against the Holy Ghost, and a fully cordial unbelief and hatred of God, and an habitual indulgence of themselves in sin, only excepted, 2 Sam. xi Acts xxvi. 11. 1 Kings xi. 2 Chron. xvi. and xviii. and xxxii. 25. Mat. xxvi. 69,—74. God alone knows, how far an hypocrite may go in appearances of saintship, or a saint in appearances of reigning wickedness, Jer. xvii. 9, 10.

In believers, *at least one particular lust often appears much unmortified.* Hence, it long prevails in opposition to the more spiritual exercises of religion. In searching for marks of grace, and attempting to apply promises of pardon in a consistency with it, they obtain a kind of peace of mind under it;—their will frequently consents to sinful acts, which proceed from it: they oppose it only, or chiefly, with arguments drawn from the danger of it.—Their heart is hardened under rational convictions of its sinfulness. They comply with the enticements of it, in opposition to alarming convictions and afflictions, &c. 2 Sam. xi; xii. 1 Kings xi.—Such prevalence of any one particular lust is *extremely hurtful.* It darkens the evidences of their gracious sincerity: it dasheth their solid hopes of victory over indwelling sin, and leads them to establish them upon false foundations; it hardens their heart, and renders the neglect of religious duties easy; or renders the performance of them careless and unprofitable: it hinders their exercise of faith, and sense of God's love, and their familiar fellowship with him: it wounds the heart of Christ, and grieves

grieves his Spirit: it hinders God's gracious answering of their prayers, and their spiritual flourishing in his way, or being useful to others. It unfits them for death, 2 Sam. xi; xii. 1 Kings xi, 2 Chron. xvi. Psal. li. and lxviii, 18.

Through believers pride of former victories over sinful lusts; and through their unwatchfulness over the first motions of lusts and temptations; and neglect of immediate application to Christ's word, blood and Spirit for establishment; and through their improper opposition of sin in their own strength, —with their knowledge rather than their affection, or in an indolent or legal manner,—or chiefly to procure their own honour and comfort,—one or more particular sinful lusts, which once appeared mortified, may *mightily revive and recover strength*. —And though they do not frequently push them into gross sins, of which they had truly repented; yet they may repeatedly plunge them into more refined and spiritual wickedness, for which they have sorrowed after a godly sort, Jer. iii. 14, 22. Hos. xiv. 4.

Frequent indisposition to the more spiritual exercises of religion;—inconstant sense of the need of Jesus' blood and Spirit, or little care to apply them; pleasure and delight in remembering former idols;—much inward grief and pain for the loss of idolized creatures;—little feeling of the power, pollution and motions of indwelling lusts;—much anxious perturbation of mind concerning the guilt of sin, and events of providence; habitual unwillingness to die, and the like, are awful evidences of much deficiency in mortification, and of the great prevalency of indwelling corruptions, Ez. k. xxiii. 19. Isa. lvii 17. Mat. xiv. 3.—On the other hand, much vigorous and habitual application of Christ's word, blood, and Spirit;—much abounding in the exercise of faith, love, humility, and such other implanted graces, as are most contrary and destructive to our principal, pre-

murder, adultery, blasphemy, solemn renunciation of divine truths, hatred and persecution of fellow saints and faithful ministers; rebellion against light and love, afflictions, warnings, convictions, resolutions, and solemn vows; impenitence and obduracy under fearful guilt for a time; and, in fine, to every degree of wickedness,—the blasphemy against the Holy Ghost, and a fully cordial unbelief and hatred of God, and an habitual indulgence of themselves in sin, only excepted, 2 Sam. xi Acts xxvi. 11. 1 Kings xi. 2 Chron. xvi. and xviii. and xxxii. 25. Mat. xxvi. 69,—74. God alone knows, how far an hypocrite may go in appearances of saintship, or a saint in appearances of reigning wickedness, Jer. xvii. 9, 10.

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Frequent indisposition to the more spiritual exercises of religion;—inconstant sense of the need of Jesus' blood and Spirit, or little care to apply them; pleasure and delight in remembering former idols;—much inward grief and pain for the loss of idolized creatures;—little feeling of the power, pollution and motions of indwelling lusts;—much anxious perturbation of mind concerning the guilt of sin, and events of providence; habitual unwillingness to die, and the like, are awful evidences of *much deficiency in mortification*, and of the *great prevalency* of indwelling corruptions, Ez. k. xxiii. 19. Isa. lvii. 17. Mat. xiv. 3.—On the other hand, much vigorous and habitual application of Christ's word, blood, and Spirit;—much abounding in the exercise of faith, love, humility, and such other implanted graces, as are most contrary and destructive to our principal, pre-

dominant, or beloved lusts ;—remarkable decrease of the disturbance given by our inward corruptions to the more spiritual exercises of religion ; an increasing inclination to live on God's word, and promote the honour of Christ and his free grace ; a growing insight into, and hatred of indwelling lusts ; —much grief in remembering former pleasure and delight in sin, are *certain marks of increasing mortification* of it.

The mortification of indwelling sin ought to be **VERY EARNESTLY** studied. God hath solemnly required it. We cannot be conformed to him, or hold fellowship with him without it. Christ came into the world, that he might destroy the works of the devil. The Holy Ghost and all our spiritual privileges are given to us, in order to promote it. Sin, by every one of its motions, labours to have, or fix its absolute and eternally ruinous dominion over our soul. The **ADVANTAGE** of an earnest and evangelical study of mortification is very great. —It increaseth our knowledge of Jesus Christ, in his person, offices, righteousness, and grace, and of the deceitfulness and desperate wickedness of our heart, and of the subtlety and power of Satan :—it increaseth our hatred of sin, and promotes our victory over temptations :—it manifests our interest in Jesus Christ, and conforms us to his image. It introduceth much pleasant fellowship with him on earth, and renders us remarkably useful to those around us, and ripe for heaven.—The **NEGLECT** of mortification is *very hurtful*. It hardens our heart, and invigorates our lusts. It darkens the evidence of our gracious sincerity, and weakens our hope of eternal happiness. It provokes God to withhold his direction, preservation, gracious and comfortable influences from us ; or even to blast our gifts. It often occasions men's falling into scandalous crimes, Col. iii. 5. 2 Pet. ii. 7. 1 John iii. 8. Rom. vi 11, 12. Eph. v. 25, —27. Rom. vii. 14, —25. 2 Cor.

2 Cor. xii. 1,—9, 21. 2 Sam. xi; xii. 1 Kings xi. 1 Chron. xvi; xviii. and xxxii. 25. Matth. xxvi. 69,—74.

In the mortification of sin, the Spirit of God and true believers in Christ are the **PRINCIPAL AGENTS**. In the glass of God's law, and death of his Son, the Holy Ghost discovers the nature, pollution, guilt and danger of sin, and fills them with grief on account of it. He reveals Christ and his fulness, as *sufficient, suitable, and given by God* in the gospel for their relief, and enables their heart to trust in him for it. He applies him in his death and resurrection to their soul, for the destruction of their sin;—and, from his fulness, conveys new supplies of saving grace, to oppose indwelling sin, and take the place of it in their nature. He renders word and sacraments' effectual means of applying Christ's righteousness and grace to their heart, for weaning it from sin, self, and the world. By his powerful intercession in them, he hastens forward their spiritual furniture, assistance and victories. He sanctifies their afflictions, and makes them useful means of discovering God's displeasure with their sinfulness,—and of discovering the insignificance of tempting objects,—and of making them attentive to his word,—and of exciting their diversified graces to their proper work.

Believers themselves must mortify their indwelling lusts **THROUGH THE SPIRIT**. This work is assigned to him in their redemption. They have no natural inclination or strength for it themselves.—The ordinances of the gospel have no influence towards the destruction of sin, but as he works in, and by them, and through them, conveys Jesus Christ, and his blood and grace into their heart. In their mortification of sin *through the Spirit*, believers must (1.) *Carefully avoid all speaking of peace to their conscience, when he doth not speak it.* All peace produced by presumptuous or legal application of di-

vine promises,—or, which is founded on their own prayers, resolutions, or virtuous inclinations or deeds, instead of the blood of Christ, as the only atonement for sin,—or, which doth not lead out to much self-abasement before God, resignation to his will, and conformity to his image, earnest desire of familiar fellowship with him, and delightful, and earnest, and universal regard to all his commandments,—hardens the heart in sin, turns the grace of God into licentiousness, grieves the Holy Ghost, and draws on perplexity and confusion on the conscience, whenever it becomes awakened. (2.) *Carefully avoid all grieving, resisting and quenching of the Holy Spirit*,—through indulgence of any particular sin,—or opposition of his convictions, illuminations, quickenings and consolations,—or coveting his sensible comforts more than his sanctifying influences,—or, through covetousness of earthly things, carnal security, and spiritual sloth, provoking him to withdraw his striving influences, Eph. iv. 30. 1 Thess. v. 19. Nay, they must carefully cherish his influences, in readily receiving them,—in being excited by them,—and in earnestly desiring and seeking after further degrees and measures of them, &c. (3.) They must aim at the same end with the Holy Ghost, even the glory of God, as reconciled in Christ,—in the utter destruction of their sin;—and hence readily improve all his means of word, ordinances, or providences, in order to obtain this end. (4.) Depending on the Spirit as given by Christ in his promise, to work all their gracious work in them, they must use the same evangelical methods of mortification which he directs, and no other, *Popish or legal*.

Thus (1.) As the Holy Ghost, by uniting them to Christ, as made of God unto them wisdom, righteousness, sanctification and redemption, justifies and regenerates them;—so they must found all their endeavours

endeavours to mortify their lusts, in spiritual union with Christ, free and full justification through his righteousness imputed, and powerful regeneration after his image. Thus the death of sin is infallibly secured through Christ's being their husband and life;—the curse of the law, which is the strength of sin, is removed;—the divine persons and perfections are immutably engaged to assist and succeed them in their conflicts with sin,—the throne of their heart is given to Christ;—a principle of hatred to sin,—an army of graces to oppose it, are implanted and infallibly preserved. Without this, all apparent opposition to sin, is but an hatred of the justice and holiness of God for annexing terrible punishments to sin, and is improven to divert men from their preper exercise of entering by Christ as the true door and gate, the way, the truth and the life. Every attempt to mortify sin, must therefore begin in a believing reception of Christ, as freely offered in the gospel, 1 Cor. i. 30 Col. ii. 6. John xiv. 6, and x. 9.

(2.) As the Holy Ghost introduceth his mortifying influences by deep convictions of the true nature of sin, particularly indwelling corruption, unbelief, beloved lusts;—so believers, by viewing these things in the glass of God's law, and of the sufferings of Christ as their own Saviour,—must labour to have a deep and evangelical conviction of their nature and aggravations,—how contrary they are to the holy law, the infinitely pure nature, and unbounded free grace and honour of God;—how contrary they are to the whole work of redemption;—and to the implanted graces and influences of the Holy Ghost;—and how they hinder or defile every duty of religion.—Such *deep conviction* is necessary to make us apprehend the greatness of the love of the divine persons in our salvation;—to manifest the absolute need of God's almighty power and grace to accomplish the mortification of sin;—to render

us humble under the highest attainment in holiness and comfort,—jealous and diffident of ourselves, and watchful against lusts and temptations.—In our endeavours after this deep sense of sin, we ought carefully to observe, Whether the symptoms of particular lusts in us be very dangerous or not ; whether these lusts appear deep rooted in habit or custom, and cherished by our natural temper ;—as these symptoms exceedingly aggravate their sinfulness,—give Satan great advantage against us, and manifest, that there is need of much solemn fasting and prayer, in order to our obtaining relief, Hag. i. 5, 7. Lam. iii. 40. Zeph. ii. 1. Mat. xvii. 21.

(3.) As the Holy Ghost earnestly aims at the destruction of the whole body of sin, particularly of unbelief and beloved lusts ;—so must believers, in their study of mortification. That is necessary to manifest their sincerity,—to encourage them to employ him as their assistant,—and to render the mortification of other particular lusts more easy. All attempts towards partial mortification proceed from the corrupt principle of self-love,—manifest hypocrisy,—encourage the indulgence or fulfilment of other lusts,—and provoke God to give us up to be overcome by them, Rom. vii. 14.—24.

(4.) As the Holy Ghost hath away all their lusts, and even every motion, occasion, or connexion thereof, naked and open before him ;—so believers, having their heart endowed with the saving knowledge of God, and a filial awe of his holiness and majesty, and daily receiving and improving Christ as made of God unto them wisdom,—ought watchfully to observe what occasions have been, or may be, improved by their lusts, for their conception and birth of actual sin, and avoid all entanglement therein, as a criminal and dangerous making of provision for these lusts. They must take constant heed, that their eyes, and other bodily senses, admit no objective temptations to sin. They must improve e-

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very occasional advantage against sin to the uttermost.—And, as the very first motions of sin, spring from, and strengthen corrupt nature,—break the whole law of God, defile their soul in his sight,—exclude the motions of indwelling grace in proportion to their prevalence, and prepares the way for sinful acts,—hinder fellowship with God, unfit their mind for holy duties, harden and stupify their heart in sin,—render their conscience polluted, partial and untender,—and are very apt to escape unobserved and unopposed.—It is extremely necessary to *prevent* them,—by a holy jealousy over our own heart, and an earnest and evangelical study to keep it constantly in a tender, lively, and heavenly frame;—or, to *repress* them, when they have not been prevented,—by hating and abhorring them,—mourning over them,—crying to God to stifle them,—and in the strength of Christ bending their heart to the contrary gracious exercises, Rom. vii. 14,—24. Psalm xix. 12. Gal. v. 17, 24. 1 Cor. xv. 58.

(5.) As the Holy Ghost provides and puts on them the whole armour of God, for the mortification of sin;—so believers must take it to them, and earnestly improve it against indwelling sin, in much the same manner as against the temptations of Satan. The BLOOD OR RIGHTEOUSNESS of Christ is remarkably useful in the mortification of sin,—as therein is discovered the true and aggravated nature of sin, as against an infinitely high and holy law and nature of God, our creator, preserver and redeemer; and as against the redeeming love and life of the great God our Saviour, Jesus Christ. By its purchasing influence, it employs all the divine persons and perfections, in an almighty exertion of themselves for the destruction of sin. Being applied to our conscience as exhibited and given in the gospel by faith, it renders it pure and tender, inflames our heart with an hatred of sin, and conveys a sin mortifying influence, Rom. vi. 1,—14.

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and vii. 6, 25. Gal. ii. 20. and vi. 14.—The word of God is useful in the mortification of sin, as it exactly discovers the nature, forms and aggravations of it;—and, as by, and through it, Jesus' blood, or himself, as made of God unto them for wisdom, righteousness, sanctification, and redemption, is more fully and closely applied to their heart, for the destruction of the works of the devil, 1 John i. 7. John xvii. 17. and xv. 3.—In dependence on the righteousness, resurrection, intercession, and powerful influence of Christ, as the principal causes;—believers are, through the almighty and graciously sanctifying influence of the Holy Ghost, to apply to themselves the word of God, as suited to their particular cases, and thereby extract from Christ and his fulness exhibited and given in the gospel, an inclination and ability to oppose and mortify sin.—

* If plagued with atheism, let them by faith apply Jer. xxxi. 33. Ezek. xxviii. 26. If plagued with ignorance of spiritual things, let them apply Isaiah xlviii. 17. and div. 13. and xxix. 18, 24. and xlii. 7. If plagued with deadness and stupidity, let them apply John v. 25. and xi. 25. Isa. xxix. 24. and xxxii. 4. Eph. i. 14. If plagued with forgetfulness of God, let them apply Psalm xlv. 17. Zech. xi. 9. If plagued with unbelief, let them apply John xii. 32. Rom. xv. 12. Psalm xxii. 31. Isa. xlv. 22,—24. If plagued with hardness of heart, let them apply Ezek. xi. 19. and xxxvi. 26. 2 Cor. v. 17. Rev. xxi. 7. If plagued with an idolatrous heart, let them apply Exod. xx. 2, 3. Isa. ii. 18. Hos. xiv. 3. 8 Jer. iii. 23. If plagued with impenitence in sin, let them apply Zech. xii. 10. Ezek. xvi. 62, 63. and xxxvi. 31. and xx. 43. Acts v. 31. If plagued with hatred of God, let them apply Deut. xxx. 6. 2 Cor. v. 14. 1 John iv. 9, 10, 19. John iii. 16. If plagued with a superstitious

* Let plagued readers look out these and like texts in their Bible.

perstitious inclination, let them apply Jer. xxxi. 33. Ezek. xxxvi. 27. Isa. xxx. 21. Deut. xii. 32. Isaiah viii. 20. Rev. xxii. 18, 19. If plagued with blasphemous thoughts, let them apply Jer. xxxii. 38, 40. Isa. xlv. 25. and xii. 1, 2. If plagued with a guilty conscience, let them apply Isa. xlv. 12, 13. and liv. 17. and xlv. 24, 25. and lxi. 10. Ezek. xxxvi. 25, 32. Jer. xxiii. 6. and xxxiii. 16. Isa. i. 18. and xliii. 25. and xlv. 22. and lv. 7. Acts v. 31. 1 John i. 7. and ii. 1, 2. 2 Cor. v. 21. If plagued with levity and unfixedness of heart, let them apply Jer. xxxii. 39. Psal. lxxxix. 7. If they are plagued with an ungrateful and murmuring disposition, let them apply Isa. xii. 1, 3. Jer. xxxi. 12, 14, 25. If they are plagued with hypocrisy, let them apply Jer. xxxii. 39. Zeph. iii. 9, 13. If plagued with indifference and lukewarmness about the things of God, let them apply Ezek. xxxvii. 27. Zech. x. 12. If plagued with despondent apprehensions of their sinfulness, let them apply Isa. i. 18. and xliii. 24, 25. and lv. 7. and lvii. 17, 18. Exod. xxxiv. 6, 7. Mic. vii. 18, 19. 1 John i. 7. If plagued with inward grief and disquiet, let them apply Isa. xl. 1, 2. and lvii. 15, 16, 18, 19. and lxvi. 2. If plagued with a forward obstinacy in sinning, let them apply Isa. lvii. 17, 18. If plagued with pride and selfishness, let them apply Isa. ii. 11, 18. Zeph. iii. 11, 12. If plagued with an envious and malicious disposition, let them apply Deut. xxx. 6. Isa. xi. 13. If plagued with an intemperate, gluttonous, drunken or lascivious disposition, let them apply Luke xxi. 34. Eph. v. 3, 4. 19. 1 Pet. ii. 11. Ezek. xxxvi. 25, 26, 29. If prone to lies and falsehood, let them apply Zeph. iii. 13. Col. iii. 9. If plagued with a carnal and covetous heart, let them apply Isa. lvii. 17, 18. Gen. iii. 14. Isa. xxxiii. 16. Ezek. xxxvi. 27. If plagued with sullen fears of scandalous apostacy from religion, let them apply Heb. xiii. 5. Jer. xxxii. 39, 40. 1 Pet. i. 5. Jude 1. John x. 27, 29. If plagued

with fears of wanting necessary subsistence on earth, let them apply Isa. xxxiii. 16. Mat. vi. 25, — 34. Phil. iv. 6, 19. If plagued with slavish fears of trouble and death, let them apply Isa. xli. 10. and xliii. 1, 2. Psal. xlii. 15. Hos. xiii. 14. If plagued with fears of eternal damnation, let them apply Job xxxiii. 24. Rev. i. 18. 1 John iv. 9. Rom. v. 10. John v. 24. and vi. 39, 40. and iii. 16, 17. Rom. viii. 1, 33, 34. If plagued with inexpressible diversity of troubles at once, let them apply Exod. xv. 25. Ezek. xxxiv. 16. Isa. lxii. 12.

Not only are these and the like promises, and Christ and his fulness in them to be thus applied; but prayer and all other instituted ordinances are, by faith, to be improved in order to obtain proper views of sin, and excitement and encouragement and strength to oppose it, till it be utterly destroyed, Gal. v. 17, 24.

(2.) As in the mortification of sin, the Holy Ghost worketh grief and hatred of it, and draws from it, Ezek. xxxvii. 27, 31. and xvi. 63;—so believers must, in all their attempts towards it, exercise themselves in solemn and evangelical repentance. They must search out their sinfulness of heart and life, candidly confess it over their crucified Redeemer,—bitterly lament it, as against God and hateful to their soul,—and earnestly endeavour to turn from it to him and his way of holiness, Hos. xiv. 1. Jer. xxxi. 18, 19.—Such exercise of repentance ought to be *solemnly renewed*, When sin hath remarkably prevailed, and carried them into some sinful act:—or, when their indwelling lusts violently urge them to consent to one;—when God bestows some remarkable favour, or threatens or inflicts some terrible judgment, Psal. li. Rom. ii. 4. Joel ii. 12,—17.—Such solemn renewals of repentance *ought never to be delayed*, as that renders the heart more and more hardened and insensible of guilt and pollution.—And, whenever indwelling sin hath gained an advantage

vantage in one point, it improves it in hurrying even the best of men from evil to worse, 2 Sam. xi: 1, 1 Kings xi: 1, — 7. — This exercise of repentance is of great use to embitter sin, and the company of such as are infected with it, — to increase men's shudder of it, and of temptations to it, — to lead them to watchfulness over their indwelling corruptions, and to blast their fruit in the very bud, Rom. vii. 14. — 24. Eccl. vii. 26.

(7.) As the Holy Ghost in the mortification of sin conveys more and more grace from the fulness of Christ, in order that it may take the room of indwelling lusts in believers hearts, and thereby causeth them to walk in God's statutes and judgments, in opposition to the practice of sin; — so they, assisted by him, must, through the word of the gospel, daily receive these supplies of grace, and exercise their strengthened knowledge, faith, hope, repentance, love, humility, &c. in a truly Christian and holy conversation, from gratitude to him who first loved them, and gave himself for them, Phil. i. 27. Eph. iv. 1. and v. 2. John iv. 19. 2 Cor. v. 14, 15.

CHAP. III.

Casistical Hints relative to SPIRITUAL EXPERIENCES, &c. — *REMEDIES of Mistakes in Convictions, Conversion, inward frames, perplexing distresses and doubts.*

SOME unconverted persons *shift* all examination of their spiritual state. Others, having met with some convictions of their sin, *despair* of salvation,

tion. Others, on a slight and partial examination, imagine their state to be safe.

Many are led to *shift self-examination*; (1.) By their gross ignorance of the things of God; by reason of which, they neither know, what they should examine, nor how, nor by what marks. To cure this ignorance, they ought immediately and earnestly to learn the fundamental principles of the Christian religion. That there is one infinite, eternal, unchangeable, wise, powerful, holy, just, good, true, and living God, in three distinct persons, who planned, created, upholds and governs all things;—that all men have broken that covenant of life, which God at first made with them in Adam, and thereby plunged themselves into a state of sin and misery, out of which they are neither able nor willing to recover themselves;—that God, out of his own free and sovereign mercy and love, from all eternity, made a covenant with his own Son, as the Surety of a chosen part of self-ruined men,—in consequence of which he assumed their nature, and paid their debt of obedience and suffering due to the broken covenant of works; and by instructing them in the will of God as their prophet, interceding with God for them as their priest, and subduing, and ruling, and defending them as their king,—he, by his word and Spirit, effectually calls them to himself, unites them to his person, justifies them in his righteousness, adopts them into his family, and by regeneration and sanctification conforms them to his image,—that they may glorify him in a life of fellowship with him in all his instituted ordinances, and grateful obedience to all his commandments;—and be blessed with him for ever in heaven,—while those that continue in their sins, shall be for ever miserable in hell.—Pondering these truths, in their infinite importance to themselves,—they, looking upon themselves as ignorant, guilty, polluted, and enslaved,

enslaved, ought to receive Jesus Christ, as made of God and freely offered to them in the gospel, for wisdom, righteousness, sanctification and redemption, John xvii. 3. 2 Thess. i. 7, — 9. 1 Cor. i. 30.

(2.) Or, through the deceitful workings of Satan and their own corruptions, and God's giving them up to believe lies, and others seduction of them into error, — they are rendered incapable of, or unwilling to attempt any impartial self-examination.

— To REMEDY this, the persons seduced, ought singly and diligently to search the word of God, earnestly desirous of, and depending on the illumination and direction of his Spirit, and receiving Jesus Christ, as the *Messenger, Interpreter, True Witness, Light, Way, Truth, and Life*, given to sinful men, they ought with grief and shame to embrace the declarations of God's word, in opposition to their former errors, John v. 39. Acts xvii. 11. IIa. viii. 20. and lv. 3, 4. and x'ii. 6, 7. John xiv. 6.

(3.) Or, through a vain conceit of their own wisdom, — their abounding in worldly honour, pleasure, power or wealth, — and through their intimacy with, and esteem of wicked persons, — offence at the afflictions of saints, — and negligent or no consideration of God's judgments, — *contemn the scriptures*, and set up their own fancies and self love for a proper standard of self examination. — For a REMEDY of this, such persons ought, as before God, to ponder the numerous documents of the divine inspiration and authority of the scriptures, and earnestly beg, That the Holy Ghost would compleat the evidence by an almighty application of them to their heart. They ought to consider, what fearful representation the word of God gives of those in their condition; — how insignificant they and all that they have, are before God; — and how incorrespondent with, and unworthy of, the eternal enjoyment, of him. — They ought to ponder, That with God there is no respect of persons; and therefore,

fore, if they die without Christ, they must be eternally miserable. They ought to regard the language of these afflictions which they suffer. And, in fine, under deep conviction of their former trusting in refuges of lies, to flee to Jesus Christ, as freely offered to them in the gospel, for their alone Saviour, Plal. xlix ; lxii ; lxxiii. John xviii ; xx. Isa. xxviii.

(4.) Or, through frequent trampling on the admonitions of their conscience,—and thro' God's giving them up to their lusts, and Satan's pushing them from one sin to another,—their conscience hath become altogether seared and stupified.—FOR REMEDY of this, such persons ought to remark the judgments of God on themselves and others ; to ponder, with close application, his commands and threatenings ; seriously to consider their dreadful and almost desperate condition ;—and to consider the sufferings of Christ, as the most awful demonstration of the infinite holiness and righteousness of God's nature and law, and of the terrible condition of those that die in their sins—and as the only price of their eternal salvation, and great mean of purging their conscience from dead works,—and thus apply him to themselves, as able to save them to the uttermost, and as God's free gift, earnestly offered to them in the gospel, for righteousness and salvation, Mic. vii. 9. Eph. v. 14. Prov. ix. 4, 5. and viii. 22,—32. Isa. li. 37.

(5.) Or, through affected ignorance how to examine themselves,—fixed purpose to continue their hunting after sinful profits and pleasures,—and consciousness, that they cannot abide the trial of God's word,—they are filled with a *timorous fear of self-examination*.—FOR REMEDY of this, such persons ought seriously to consider, That God perfectly knows them and all their concerns, and will shortly call them to an exact and awful account, at death and the last judgment ;—that if they do not now
search

search and condemn themselves, they shall be condemned with the world;—and that their dread of self examination is an awful mark of the badness of their state:—and therefore, as poor, lost, polluted, and self ruined sinners, to flee to, and embrace Jesus Christ, as in the gospel made over to them, for righteousness and salvation,—that in consequence hereof, their most accurate trial of themselves may tend to their comfort, Deut. xxxii. 29. Isa. lv. 1, —17. and xlv. 22,—25. and xvi. 12, 13. 2 Pet. i. 10.

(6.) Or, from an unwillingness to mental exercise, and from a vain conceit of their ability to examine themselves when they please,—and from the bewitching influence of sinful pleasures, and their deceitful heart, they, contenting themselves with mere resolutions to believe and repent,—*defer all present self examination and serious concern* for their soul.—

For REMEDY of this, such persons ought to consider, How inexpressibly foolish it is to prefer the pleasures of sin and sense, to those of familiar fellowship with Christ, even for a time;—how terribly wicked it is to continue in sin, in hopes that God's patience and mercy will afterwards abound;—how soon their day of salvation may expire, and the Spirit of God cease to strive with their conscience, and swear in his wrath, That they shall never enter into his rest.—and, under the alarming impression of these things, to receive Jesus Christ, as now made over to them, as an all-sufficient Saviour, and all his salvation, Heb. iii. 9,—18. and iv. 1,—3. Psal. xcv. 7,—11. 2 Cor. vi. 2.

(7.) Or, they are so overcharged with carnal care about worldly things, pleasures, honours, or profits, that they *can mind nothing else*.—For REMEDY of this, such persons, as if on the brink of eternity, ought seriously to consider, How insignificant, uncertain, and short lived all the enjoyments of this world are;—how unprofitable it would be to gain the

the whole world, at the expence of losing their own soul ;—how many millions such earthly cares have already drowned in everlasting perdition ;—and, in the view of all refuge failing them, to flee to, and embrace Jesus Christ, offered in his word, as an almighty Saviour from a present evil world, as well as from sin and hell, Prov. ii. 2, 3, 5. Mat xvi. 26. 1 Tim. vi. 9,—11. and i. 15. Tit. ii. 11—14. Gal. i. 4.

Some unconverted persons, when they are convinced of their sinful and miserable estate, *sink in despair*, either of *sinful security*, in which, having become hopeless of attaining real reformation and salvation, they abandon themselves to the gratification of their lusts ;—or, of *tormenting anxiety*, in which, being filled with terrible apprehensions of God's eternal wrath inevitably coming upon them, they murmur against him, rage at sin, and themselves for committing it ; and are apt to be inclined to murder themselves.——Such despair ariseth from their attending more to the guilt of their sin, and the misery which it brings upon them, than to the nature, fault, and pollution of it ;—from their ignorance of God's infinite mercy and power, and Christ's infinite merit and saving virtue ;—from conscience-confounding temptations of Satan ;—from their own intermeddling with God's secret purposes of election and reprobation, instead of applying the free promises and gracious offers of the gospel, which are so plainly pointed to them ;—or from their sullen imaginations, that they have outlived their day of grace, or committed the unpardonable sin against the Holy Ghost. A report of another person's murdering himself in like circumstances, or an hysterical disorder in their body, is apt to occasion or increase the confusion of their mind.

FOR REMEDY of this despair, persons affected with it, ought earnestly to view the sinfulness of their nature and life in the glass of God's law and sufferings
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of Christ, that they may have a more full apprehension of its true nature and tendency;—they ought seriously to ponder how infinitely criminal their indulged despair is,—as it is an outrageous and blasphemous distrusting, reproaching, and trampling upon all the infinite mercy of God, merits and saving power of Christ, and all the *exceeding great and precious promises* of the gospel, in which salvation is brought near to, and urged upon them;—they ought to remember, That as yet they have nothing to do with the purposes of God, but only with the open declarations of his Law and Gospel, which all concur to shut them up to believe in Christ;—they ought to consider what astonishing monuments of his redeeming power and grace, and of the virtue of Jesus' blood, God hath already set up for their encouragement, in Manassah,—Mary Magdalene,—the harlot of Samaria,—Saul of Tarsus,—the murderers of Christ,—the sorcerers of Ephesus,—the monsters of Corinth, &c.—and that he can still further stretch his saving influence;—and therefore looking on themselves as unparalleled sinners, they ought, though it were at first with no more than *It may be the Lord will be gracious*, to attempt applying to themselves the most extensive invitations, offers, and promises of the gospel, as Isa. lv. 1, 7. and xlv. 12, 13, and xlv. 22, 25, and lxi. 1, 3. and xlii. 6, 7. Acts vi. 26, and v. 31, and Tim. i. 15, 16. John vi. 37. Rev. xxii. 17. Prov. i. 22, 23, and ix. 4, 5, 6.

Multitudes of gospel-hearers fancy themselves already converted, and by a frequent repetition of this fancy in their mind, they work themselves up to a kind of *fixed, but ill grounded assurance* of it. This persuasion they found upon their being members of the visible church, and admitted to the sealing ordinances or sacred offices of it;—their having much knowledge and other gifts,—an high profession, and a practice more blameless than that of

many others ;—their opposing of their sin by vows, resolutions, inward strugglings, and avoidance of temptations ;—their apparent desires and manifold resemblances of true grace in their heart ;—their rational and temporary faith in God's word, trembling at, or with joy receiving it ;—their delight in the ordinances of God, and company of saints and ministers ;—their ardent zeal and extensive sufferings for the cause of Christ ;—their much abounding and great enlargement in prayer and other religious duties ;—their strong hopes of heaven, and excitement to religious services thereby ;—the remarkable alteration in their affections and conversation ;—their remarkable acquaintance with inward troubles and pleasant frames, Rom. iv. 6. Mat. xiii. 20,—22. and xii. 43. and xix. 20. Isa. lviii. 2. Heb. vi. 4, 5. 2 Pet. ii. 18, 19. 1 Cor. xiii. 1,—3.

FOR UNDERMINING this ruinous presumption, such persons ought, in an earnest looking up to the Holy Ghost for his direction and effectual sweeping away of all their *refuges of lies*,—to ponder how far the marks of real grace mentioned in scripture go beyond all the above mentioned attainments ; that true believers deny themselves, renounce all their own wisdom, righteousness, strength and holiness, as ignorance and folly, guilt and nakedness, weakness and pollution before God ; and heartily receive and highly esteem Jesus Christ, as made of God unto them wisdom, righteousness, sanctification and redemption ;—they are burdened with indwelling lusts, even the most spiritual and beloved, as their heaviest burden, and most loathsome and horrible plague ;—they exceedingly love the holy and extensive law of God, and endeavour an universal obedience to it ;—they highly esteem the ordinances of the gospel from love to Jesus Christ, and as means of fellowship with him ;—they love all the saints, as such, in proportion to Christ's image on them, Phil. iii. 3, 8, 9. 1 Pet. ii. 7. Rom. vii. 14,—

24th Psalm cxix. and lxxxiv. 1, 2, 10. 1 John iii. 14. and ii. —v —They ought impartially to examine their appearances of grace by the standard of God's word, and carefully observe their deficiency, Mat. v. John ii. —v. They ought to consider, That the nearer one approach to the kingdom of God, without entering it by the strait gate of Christ, and regeneration through union to him, —the more dreadful is his danger. And, therefore, renouncing all their attainments, to flee to him as their alone Saviour and salvation, 2 Cor. xiii. 5. Phil. iii. 3, —14. Gal. i. 15, 16. and ii. 16, 19, —21.

Some gospel-hearers, upon self-examination and conviction of their sinfulness and absolute need of Christ and his salvation, are deterred from receiving him, by their views of his infinite highness and excellency, and of their own baseness, unworthiness, and unpreparedness for him, —their apprehended want of due conviction or humiliation for sin, Luke v. 8. —FOR REMEDY of this sinful timorousness, such persons must take no encouragement from the smallness of their sin, or from any apparent goodness about themselves, —as that would be putting confidence in the flesh, and a slight healing of their wounds made by conviction, which but increaseth the disorder. But they must consider, That, tho' Jesus Christ be infinitely excellent, his principal aim is to manifest that excellency, *in an exceeding riches of grace towards men*; —that, as he is an infinitely merciful God, Brother and High Priest, he hath received gifts for men, even for the rebellious also, which he must necessarily bestow upon them; —that all the promises and invitations of the gospel call and warrant men, not as duly prepared by some goodness of their own, —but as *sinful and miserable*, to come to Christ, —that legal convictions are not good in themselves, but only are made useful in driving men to Christ; —that it is highly absurd and injurious to the honour of Christ, to attempt or expect

any true goodness in men, but in a state of spiritual union to him, Eph. ii. 7. Acts xx. 35. Psalm lxviii. 18. Acts v. 31. and iii. 26. Heb. vii. 25. John vi. 37. Exod. xxxiv. 6, 7. Mic. vii. 18, 19. 2 Cor. v. 18,—21. Rom. xi. 26. Luke xix. 10. Matth. ix. 13. and xviii. 11. 1 Cor. i. 30. 2 Cor. v. 17. Eph. ii. 10. John xv. 4, 5.

Unconverted persons have many and powerful motives and encouragements to lay hold on Jesus Christ and his salvation freely offered to them, which they ought seriously to consider, as a mean of conveying his influences into their heart,—such as, the greatness of their sinfulness, misery, and danger in their present state;—the emptiness, unsuitableness and short duration of earthly enjoyments, which render them not only an unfit portion for, but ensnaring to their soul;—the baseness, vileness, shamefulness, and hurtfulness of sin; and the true honour, profit and pleasure of holiness; the incomparable glory, fulness, and suitableness of Christ as a Saviour, and his infinite mercy, kindness, and delight in saving men; the inexpressible folly, ingratitude, wickedness and danger of rejecting him; the free, extensive, earnest, and often repeated calls of the gospel, inviting men, *precisely as sinful and miserable*, even in the highest degree possible on earth;—the absolute freedom, infinite fulness and exact answerableness of the promises to every particular person and plague.——Nevertheless, as Satan and their own indwelling lusts, by fraud and force, put all possible bars in the way of men's conversion to God, many are brought to the spiritual birth, and yet never born again, but rest in such attainments as fall short of it;—and, such as are effectually converted, are apprehended by Jesus Christ, when, through the irritation of their corruptions by the holy law of God, they are at their very worst, Matt. xiii. 19,—22. Heb. vi. 4, 5. Isa. lviii. 2. Rom. vii. 8,—13.—It is

is therefore manifest, that their regeneration and conversion must be wholly owing to the superabundant displays of God's infinite wisdom, power and grace, Rom. viii. 7, 8. John vi. 44. Eph. i. 7, 8. and ii. 1,—10.

II. The work of the Holy Ghost in drawing elect men to Jesus Christ is alway the same in substance, effectually persuading and enabling every one of them to rest on him alone for salvation, and immediately issueth in a perfect change of their state, and universal change of their nature, 2 Cor. v. 17,—21. Gal. vi. 15 ;—but it is very different in circumstances. Some are sanctified from the womb, or, at least, when we cannot discern how there can be any instrumentality of the word in the regenerating work. Others are suddenly converted in their dying moments, Luke i. and xxiii. 42, 43. Some have sudden and violent pangs of conviction before they be converted, Acts ii. 37. and xvi. 30. Others are so quickly captivated, by discoveries of Christ and his love, that their conviction and regeneration are almost contemporary, Luke xix. 1,—10. John iv. 26, 29. Acts xvi. 19. Others are very gradually brought to Christ, through manifold convictions and spiritual allurements,—God's preparatory work in their soul continuing for months, or years, amidst which many sleepings and backslidings mingled with occasional awakenings and recoveries are found.—Sometimes, for the more remarkable embittering of sin, to those who have been guilty of gross wickedness ;—for rendering Christ more precious to their soul ;—for training them up to resignation under sore troubles ;—or, for qualifying them to be sympathizing assistants to wounded spirits, God brings men through very terrible pangs of conviction and temptation.—In some, especially those that are converted from gross impieties, the operations of the Spirit of God are so powerful

powerful and discernible, and the effects so visible, that the time of their conversion is distinctly known. In others, particularly those that have had a religious education, the convincing and alluring work being early begun, is carried on so gradually, that they, who experience it, scarcely know WHEN it first conquered and renewed their heart; or, when the saving work succeeded God's preparations for it.—In some, the work is so distinct, that they can plainly discern how the Holy Ghost swept away their several lying refuges; and by distinct strokes cut them off from their natural root and united them to Christ,—and how their soul acted under his influence, in giving up with all their false confidences, and in receiving Christ in answerableness to their need. In others, the work is carried on amidst such darkness and confusion, that they are led, *as blind*, and often reel and stagger like drunken men at their wits end; and hence are incapable of judging how their heart is affected or acts;—or, whether the work was truly saving or not;—or even, Whether it be the Spirit of God or Satan as an angel of light, that was dealing with them?

In the experience of such persons as are gradually converted to Christ, such things as the following are often, if not ordinarily, observable. Having perhaps alarmed their conscience by the death, trouble, or conversion of some neighbour, or by their own affliction, or even their falling into some gross sin, the Spirit of God applies to it such scriptures as convince them, that all their former attainments were but *refuges of lies*.—He stirs them up to an earnest concern for their eternal salvation and by the gospel gives them some views of the possibility of it.—By gradual discoveries of the spirituality and extent of God's law, and of the vileness of their self-righteousness, and of the vanity of all their endeavours to conquer, or even restrain their lusts, now irritated by the pressure of the law upon them,

them,—and of the vanity and vexation of all earthly enjoyments,—he renders them more and more sensible of their need of salvation through Christ. He leads them out to consider, How foolishly and wickedly they have acted in refusing the Lord Jesus and his salvation, and in abusing and trampling on many precious offers and opportunities of his grace ;—and how unhappy they are in comparison of some, whom they contemned.—He, through the word of the gospel, shews them the person, offices, and infinite fulness of merit and Spirit of Christ, and his infinite all-sufficiency and exact suitableness to their circumstantiated case,—and shews them the nature, names, and relations of God as in him.—He shews them their gospel warrant, *as sinful men*, to receive and rest on him alone for salvation, as therein offered to them ; —shews them the infinite faithfulness, power, mercy and love, nay justice of God pledged in his word and oath, as the sure foundation of their faith in Christ.—And, in leading them out to read, hear, and meditate on his word, and to fervent prayer for the fulfilment of his promises,—he persuades and enables them to receive and rest upon Christ alone for salvation, as made of God to them *wisdom, righteousness, sanctification, and redemption*.—and give up themselves to him, as *foolish, ignorant, guilty, vile, wicked, and enslaved*, to be instructed, justified, sanctified, and redeemed by him alone, 1 Tim. i. 15. 1 Cor. i. 30.

III. From the first moment of their spiritual union to Christ, the happy state of believers is *equally perfect and fixed*. But their spiritual frame or condition is *extremely changeable*. To try and exercise their graces ;—to make a remarkable difference between heaven and earth ;—to glorify his own wisdom, power and love, in making contrary conditions promote the same end ;—to train up his children for heaven ;—to oblige them to look above
frames

frames and cases to himself, who maketh all things work for their good ;—to make them duely prize and cautiously improve his favours,—he often *lifteth them up, and casteth them down again*, Psal. cii. 10. and iv. 8. and xlii. 6, 7. and xxx. 6. Job xxiii. 3, 8, 9. and xiii. 15. Psalm xxxvi. 7. 1 John iii. 1. Mic. vii. 18, 19. Gal. ii. 20. 2 Cor v. 14, 15. Song ii. 3,—7. Psal. cviii. 1, 6. and xviii. 1,—3. and xci. 2. Zech. xlii. 9. Song ii. 16. John xx. 28. Isaiah xxxiii. 17. 2 Tim. iv. 7, 8. Psalm xxxi. 19. and cxix. 49, 50. and xxvi. 8. and lxxxiv. 1, 2, 10. and cxxii. 1. and xlii. 4. Song ii. 8. and viii. 3. Psalm xlii. 1, 2. and lxiii. 1, 2. Exod. xxxiv. 9. Genesis xxxii. 12, 26. Matth. xv. 21,—28. Psalm xlv. 1, 2. and xvi. 5,—8. and lxvi. 16. and xxvi. 7, 8. and ciii. 1,—6. and cxliv,—cl. Isa. xii. 1,—3. 2 Sam. xxiii. 5. Isa. xlv. 24, 25. Gal. vi. 14. 1 John i. 3, 7. Jer. xxxi. 3. Gen. xlviii. 3.—with Psal vi ; x ; xiii ; xxii ; lxix. and xxx. 7 and xlii. 4, 9, 10. and lxxiii. 1,—16. and lxxvii. 1,—9. and lxxxviii. Rom. vii. 14,—24. 2 Cor. xii. 7. 2 Sem. xi ; xii. 1 Kings xi. 2 Chron. xvi ; xviii. and xxxii. 25. Mat. xxvi. 69,—74. in which the following or like forms are exemplified.

(1.) He *lifts them up* in holy quietness and serenity of mind,—pleasant freedom from angry challenges, and composed resting in himself, in the view of every event, however gloomy.—Anon he so plungeth them into trouble, that all his waves and billows seem to pass over them. Without are fightings, and within are fears. God himself hides his face from them, frowns on them, and his terrors make them afraid, and arrows stick fast in their soul. Satan solicits, harrasseth and treads them under his feet. Inward corruptions and plagues fearfully prevail. The world contemns, reproaches and persecutes them. Scarcely any thing seems to remain, but a fearful looking for of judgment and fiery indignation to destroy them.

(2) He

(2.) He gives them clear and delightful views of himself and his truths. In his light they see light, and walk in the light of his countenance. They enjoy a pleasant and extensive and appropriating insight into the mysteries of divine persons and perfections, as manifested in Christ, and of the mysteries of the new covenant and redemption by it ;—and into their duty answerable to their circumstances —Anon, he *casts them down* into thick darkness. Under the best means of instruction, they have nothing but ignorant, indistinct, carnal and mishapen views of divine things, and walk gropping as blind men, not knowing What is presented to them ; Where they are ; What they do, or ought to do.

(3.) In *lifting them up*, he sheds abroad his love in their heart, and so inflames and arrests it by his influence, that no temptations of Satan, solicitations of the world, or even assaults of indwelling lusts can draw it aside from contemplation thereof ; and it is even a trouble to bring it down to necessary worldly business, or to converse with imperfect saints on spiritual subjects.—Anon, their hearts being deprived of the constraining influence of his love, becomes so loose and unstable, that they cannot keep it a moment fixed to any spiritual object : but multitudes of vain, ignorant, proud, legal, unbelieving, blasphemous, lascivious, malicious or covetous thoughts crowd into, and fill it.

(4.) In *lifting them up*, he, by his word and Spirit, gives them the most full assurance that he is their Saviour, Husband, Father, Friend, Physician, God, and ALL in ALL ; and enables them by faith boldly to claim him as such, without any hesitation or doubt.—Anon, he plungeth them into such uncertainty and doubting, that they dare not claim any special interest in him, strongly doubt, or even deny, that they have any ; and carefully search for arguments to confirm them in their fears that he neither is, nor ever

will be their God; and even resist the Spirit, if he attempt to testify the contrary to their conscience.

(5.) He *lifts them up*, in granting them manifestations of the heavenly glory, and of their infallible and eternal enjoyment of it, till their souls be altogether transported with desire after, delight in it, and grateful admiration of his kindness in preparing it for them.—Anon, they are plunged into such ignorance, confusion and fear, that all that glory becomes to them as a sealed book, or as a tale that hath been told; and death appears doubtful, if not infinitely dangerous to them.

(6.) He sometimes gives them such boldness of faith, that, without fear or staggering, they can appropriate to themselves every promise of the new covenant,—joyfully draw water out of these wells of salvation, and suck these breasts of consolation, with the most delightful pleasure and freedom.—Anon, they are so shaken, that they scarcely know, where to fix their hold. Every promise appears to have something in it, which forbids them to touch it. If, in trouble or otherwise, they attempt to meditate on, or pray over promises, even such as they formerly found sweet to their soul, they find them like flinty rocks, dry breasts, and wells without water.

(7.) Sometimes he so feasts them in his gospel ordinances; that the frequent return of Sabbaths, sacraments, sermons, family, social or secret worship, is their delight. Beforehand, they have God's presence secured. In it, their hearts are delightfully arrested by the manifestations of his glory and love: temptations, lusts, and vain thoughts are powerfully restrained: implanted graces flourish, and act in a most vigorous manner; and their whole soul is ravished with the most sweet and familiar fellowship with Jesus Christ. Hence they conceive an holy aversion from returning to worldly business, or have a deep impression of the Lord's presence and kindness in the performance of it.—Anon, while the Lord hides himself, the most delightful

lightful ordinances of the gospel become as *dry breasts* and a *miscarrying womb*, the approaches of them appear a trifle, a burden, or a terror : believers go up to them without any impressed promise of Christ's going before, or meeting them there. While they attend, inward levity, carelessness, legality and unbelief prevail. Hence they return discouraged,—perhaps resolved against future attendance,—or sinfully satisfied with the voice, gesture, method or manner of administration, instead of fellowship with God. In consequence of repeated disappointments, they become strangely lifeless, or formal, or even ready in part to neglect ordinances,—till violent temptations of Satan, terrible prevalence of inward lusts, pressure of outward troubles, or challenges of conscience force them back to them.

(8.) Sometimes God inflames their desire after himself, and conformity to him, to an inexpressible degree. Their soul hungers, longs, pants, cries, and follows hard after him. No discouragements check their ardour, and no enjoyments abate their desire. When they find him, sick of love, they hold him and will not let him go.—Anon, they can neither pray, cry, nor breathe after fellowship with, or conformity to him : they scarcely know or care, whether they find him or not. Nay, though they have a rational discernment of his absence, they little regard, and carelessly seek after him ; and almost content themselves with earthly enjoyments instead of him.

(9.) Sometimes believers are delightfully inflamed with an holy and prudent zeal for the honour of Christ, and welfare of his church. The zeal of his house eats them up. The dishonours of God, and desolations of Zion fill them with inexpressible grief. They would gladly spend and be spent, and not count their life dear unto them, to have Jesus Christ exalted, and his cause maintained and promoted on earth.—Anon, left to themselves, they become so selfish and lukewarm, that, if they obtain their own earthly enjoy-

ments or private edification, they care not what become of the public cause of Christ and religion in their families, congregations, country, or world, or in the ages afterward.

(10.) Sometimes he so fills their heart and mouth with his praise, that they are marvellously ready and expert in high commendations of him, and the methods of his grace.—Anon, sinful bashfulness, confusion, and carelessness altogether unfit them for conference on spiritual subjects, and they are inclined to, or expert in trifling, carnal, or reproachful discourse.

(11.) Sometimes they are delightfully lifted up above confiding in sensible frames or spiritual comforts, and do trust in, boast of, and glory in the person, righteousness, intercession, power and faithfulness of Jesus Christ, as the infallible securities and foundations of their forgiveness, acceptance with God, sanctification, spiritual comfort, and eternal happiness,—notwithstanding their deepest guilt, and most dreadful temptations and troubles.—Anon, their spiritual courage and hope alter, as their inward frames or outward life do.

(12.) Sometimes God enableth them to take a distinct view of their former gracious experiences, how **THERE** and **THEN** he, in his word and ordinances, appeared to them, intimated the pardon of all their sins, loosed all their bands, quickened all their graces, and made them sit down under Jesus' shadow with great delight, and apply the fruits of his mediation as sweet to their taste.—Anon, they lose all distinct views of these experiences, cannot discern whether they be the common or special work of the Holy Ghost, or even a Satanical delusion. And sometimes they become strangely indifferent about knowing what they were.

When believers are favoured with *spiritual elevations*, they ought carefully to examine them in all their circumstances and fruits, that they may not afterward call the nature of them in question:—they ought

ought to watch against all indulgence of pride, idolizing of frames, or sudden plunging of themselves into carnal company, or an hurry of worldly care or business. They ought to watch against temptations, —pour forth fervent supplications for the church, and prepare for perplexing troubles, 2 Cor. xiii. 5. Phil. iii. 3. Matth. xiii. 36. and xxvi. 41. Song iii. 4. and viii. 8. Eccl. vii. 15.

IV. In their spiritual depths of distress, the case of believers is *inexpressibly grievous*. Having lost their wonted sense of the Lord's kindness, and the pleasant remembrance of their former experiences of it, their mind is apt to be filled with perplexing views of their unthankfulness to him, and with painful apprehensions of his wrath falling on them in spiritual, temporal and eternal punishments. Meanwhile, Satan violently tempts, and inward corruptions struggle and prevail. Hence follows fearful dispiritedness, stupidity, and inability either to act or suffer in the exercise of religion. The clearest manifestations of Christ in his glory, or of God in his love, can scarcely be remembered, *as such*. The present motions of their inherent graces are so weak, and so mingled with many and powerful motions of sin, as to be almost, if not wholly, undiscernible by them. Their soul is in such darkness and confusion, that self examination cannot be comfortably managed.—Nevertheless, there remains an inward unwillingness to give up with all claim to Jesus Christ, or hope or desire of salvation through him;—a painful aversion from lying for ever under the power of sin, and being employed in hating and blaspheming *a God of infinite mercy and grace*;—and an inward satisfaction, that others should be saved by Christ to the honour of his mercy and blood, even though themselves should be justly damned, Psalm vi. xiii. xxxviii. and xl. 11, 12. lxix. lxxiii. lxxvii. lxxxviii.

Believers

Believers often fall into such depths of spiritual distress, because (1.) The covenant of grace makes no absolute provision against their commission of any pardonable sin,—nor any provision for their continued consolation, while they lie under the guilt of conscience wasting sins, Psalm lxxxv. 28,—35. Heb. xii. 6,—11. Isa. liv. 7,—11. and lvii. 17,—19. (2.) All their inward lusts and corruptions continue in them all the days of their life; and Satan constantly goes about seeking to devour them, Rom. vii. 14,—24. Gal. v. 17. 1 John i. 8. 1 Pet. v. 8. The Lord, for his own holy and wise ends, gives them up occasionally into the prevailing power of Satan and their lusts, 2 Sam. xi. 1 Kings xi. 2 Chron. xvi. Matth. xxvi. 67,—74. (4.) Their own sins, particularly their scandalous conscience wasting sins;—their misbehaviour under, or immediately after remarkable manifestations of God's love;—their rebellion under, or soon after heavy afflictions;—their breaking away from clear convictions of God's Spirit, or comfortable dawning of the light of his countenance;—their sudden forgetfulness of, and unthankfulness for endearing fellowship with him;—their neglect or misimprovement of noted opportunities of enjoying, worshipping and serving him; the unanswerableness of their heart and life to their light and knowledge;—the breaking out of old lusts which had been seemingly dead;—their indulgence of spiritual deadness and barrenness, and not exercising themselves in their station for the glory of God;—their want of tender sympathy towards others; their abuse of eminent gifts; their presumptuous sinning against special warnings, and the like,—*provoke God to cast them down.* These their sins are *so much the more provoking* to him, that they are committed in opposition to the gracious principles of holiness which he hath implanted in them,—and in neglect and contempt of the ready and full supplies of grace in Christ, offered to them,—and in neglect and contempt of the sufficient provision which is made in
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the new covenant against their relapsing under the dominion of sin.—committing the sin against the Holy Ghost, or even sinning at all with their whole heart, 2 Sam. xii. 14. Hos. vii. 15. Isa. lvii. 17. Psal. lxxxv. 8. Song v. 1,—6. with Gal. v. 17. Heb. iv. 14,—16. Jer. xxxii. 39, 40. 1 John iii. 9.

In these depths of spiritual pollution and wretchedness, no reasoning from scripture grounds,—no attempts to review former experiences and marks of grace,—no attempts to exercise faith, or unriddle Satan's temptations, will much avail to disentangle the distressed, if they do not more and more entangle them, till the Lord himself return. But it is their duty, (1.) Earnestly to avoid all continuance in them, or in a *perplexing sense* of sin, as that will insensibly unfit them for religious duties ;—lead them into a heartless pining away in their sin ;—give Satan an opportunity to disquiet their mind,—and entangle them in hard thoughts of God, and render them weary in waiting for him. (2.) Carefully to avoid using improper means of relief,—such as legal resolutions and attempts to yield obedience to the law as a covenant ;—diverting of convictions and trouble by worldly business, carnal company or mirth ;—extenuation of their case or sinful causes of it ;—slight healing of their wounds by indolent, legal, or merely rational application of promises. (3.) Carefully to attempt the diligent use of every proper mean of relief. They ought seriously to call to mind their former experiences, and how, and whence they have fallen ;—they ought to study a deep and constant sense of their sad condition, and thoughtfulness how to obtain proper relief :—They ought to study a deep and practical sense of their sinful conduct,—in its dreadful nature and high aggravation,—as a rebellion against the law of their own reconciled God, and contrary to his nature,—as a trampling on the redeeming love, and a new shedding the blood of the great God their Saviour,—and as a quenching, resisting and grieving of the Holy Ghost, by whom they

they are sealed up to the day of redemption,—and to confess and bitterly lament over it before the Lord :—They ought to justify the Lord in all that which hath come upon them,—abhor and condemn themselves,—and earnestly looking up to him for relief, and closing with Christ by a new act of faith,—to embrace and rest on his promise of pardon and deliverance, Psalm xxxviii. 17. Rom. vii. 14,—20. Zech. xii. 10. Rev. ii. 5. Job xxxiii. 27, 28. and xl. 4. and xlii. 5, 6. Ezek. xxxvi. 25,—32. Isa. lvii. 17,—19

In delivering his people out of their spiritual depths, the Lord gradually works up their soul to a more full, free, and unlimited resignation to his will—He renders them chiefly concerned about the power of their indwelling sins ;—and afraid of their wounds being closed before the corrupt matter be purged out—He secretly conveys refreshing strength into their soul—He calls off Satan as soon as his commission is expired.—He gives them clearer and more affecting views of spiritual things and of their own plagues, and the means of deliverance, Judges x. 15. 2 Cor. xii. 9. and iv. 6. Psalm cxxxviii. 1, 2.

After their deliverance, he makes them, in the review of their distress, to observe how fearfully they sinned under it,—in hard thoughts of God ;—in fretting against his dispensations ;—in setting limits to his power and grace ;—in obstinate adhering to rash conclusions drawn from their troubles ;—in readiness to entertain every suggestion contrary to their true comfort ;—in aversion from, or indolence in stretching out their withered hand at Christ's call ;—and in grieving of his Spirit by resisting his supporting and comforting influences, Job xxxiii. 27, 28. Ezek. xxxvi. 31, 32.

—He makes them also to observe his formerly unperceived kindness to them in their trouble,—in his unseen support of their spirits under it ;—in his giving them pleasant breathings and intervals that might recruit their strength for new conflicts ; in giving them
strength.

strengthening cordials by his word ;—in giving them hopes of a gracious issue of their trouble ;—in keeping them in some temper in their extremities ;—in Christ's continued sympathy with them, Lam. iii. 22, 22.

Even these perplexing distresses are of great use to believers. By them, as managed by their gracious God, their spiritual concerns are set in a clear light ; their evangelic repentance of sin, and godly sorrow for it, are increased ;—their souls are more humbled before God and men ;—their love and sympathy towards souls, particularly such as bear Christ's image, is drawn out ; their holy awe of God in his word and providences is increased ; their hatred of sin is strengthened and inflamed ;—foretastes of their future glory are occasioned ;—their hearts are tuned to praise God the more sweetly, when they receive the deliverance, and in the eternal state,—and to rejoice in himself.—They are taught to put a just value upon the things of time, and excited to long for the heavenly perfection, Psalm xciv. 12. and cxix. 67, 71. Heb. xii. 6,—11. 2 Cor. v. 1,—8. Phil. i. 23.

As the first dreadful view of convinced souls, is, That God hath *marked iniquity* against them, so their view of him, as a great forgiver, is first in order to their real relief, Psalm cxxx. 3, 4, 7, 8. and xxxii. 1,—6. and lxxxv. 1,—13.—It is not easy for convinced and distressed souls to obtain kindly and distinct views of forgiveness with God for themselves. Their natural apprehensions of God afford no hints of it. Their natural conscience, when awakened, doth, in his name, curse and condemn them for their sin. The law of God, in its natural appearance, seems to be against his forgiving their sins.—In its original source, its channel, its price, and the manner of conveying and receiving it, and in the effects of it on the soul, Forgiveness of men's sins by God, is exceedingly mysterious, Rom. ii. 14. and

vii. 12, 14. Mic. vii. 18, 19. Exod. xxxiii. 18, 19. Eph. i. 5,—7. Dan. ix. 24. Rom. iv. 24,—26. Acts v. 31. Col. ii. 13. Acts xiii. 38, 39.—No efficacious discovery of forgiveness with God is made but to faith alone. Only true faith can conceive of it as a gospel mystery. Only true faith can receive it as an infinitely valuable and free gift, Rom. i. 17. Acts xxvi. 18. Gal. ii. 16. And, in receiving it, faith fixeth upon the infinitely free, firm and faithful promises of the gospel, and therein, upon the blood and mediation of Christ, and gracious characters of God in him, as its ground of persuasion and claim, Isa. i. 18. and xliii. 25. and xliv. 22. and lv. 7. 1 John i. 7. and ii. 1, 2. Rom. v. 6,—11, 16,—21. 2 Cor. v. 21. Psalm lxxxvi. 5, 10, 15. Exod. xxxiv. 6, 7.

Because his own law and men's own natural apprehensions of his nature appear to dissuade convinced persons from the belief of forgiveness with God for them ;—because the truth itself is of infinite importance, the pardon of sin being full, free, everlasting, and already laid up for us in Christ, and brought near to us in him, and all the perfections of God are clearly manifested and highly exalted in it,—because the condition of convinced persons is exceedingly diversified, and their unbelief of pardon extremely strong ;—because, through their ignorance of God in Christ,—their weakness of faith in depths of inward trouble,—their violent inclination to build their hopes and comforts on their own righteousness,—their ready hearkening to Satan's especial opposition to this truth, the faith of which is the foundation of all gospel holiness, it is extremely hard to believe this forgiveness, even after special manifestations of God's love ;—because many gospel hearers, through their want of thorough convictions,—their contempt of the gospel and ignorance of the power of it,—their trust in the general mercy of God, and legal dependance on their own prayers,

prayers, resolutions, and works, to recommend them to him,—their lying under the power of their lusts,—and inclination to turn the grace of God into licentiousness,—never attempt to believe the gospel offers and promises of this forgiveness;—and because many who do attempt, mistake in their work, and merely fancy that they do, or have believed them,——THEREFORE, God hath given many, certain, and evident proofs, That there is an abundant *forgiveness* for sinful men with him. He published the first promise of it immediately after our first parents had committed a sin most astonishingly heinous, by which, in the most aggravated manner, the whole millions of mankind were corrupted and ruined. He instituted multitudes of sacrifices, and other types, which prefigured and represented it. He hath made a new covenant, and published innumerable offers of a free and full forgiveness. He hath appointed many ordinances of religious worship, which necessarily suppose or exhibit this forgiveness. He exerciseth marvellous patience toward sinful men for gracious ends. He hath actually pardoned, accepted, and glorified many of the most outrageous sinners. He hath commanded gospel repentance, which must flow from forgiveness; and commands us to forgive the injuries which others do to us, in the faith of his forgiving the injuries which we have done to his honour.—Some of his manifested perfections cannot be taken up without views of his readiness to forgive our sins. He hath given his only begotten Son to obey and suffer for men, that they might be forgiven, and be made the righteousness of God in him, Gen. iii. 15. Lev. i.—vii; xvi. Num. xxviii; xxix. Jer xxxi. 33, 34. Heb. viii. 10, 12. Acts ii. 38, 39. Matth. xxviii. 19 and xxvi. 28. Rom. ii. 5. and ix. 23. 2 Pet. ii. 9. 1 Cor. vi. 9.—11. 1 Tim. i. 13.—16. Neh. ix. 17. Exod. xxxiv. 6, 7. Rom. iii. 24,

—26. 1 John iv. 9, 10. 2 Cor. v. 21. 1 Pet. i. 19, and ii. 24. and iii. 18. Rev. i. 5. and v. 9.

The duty, therefore, of distressed souls, with respect to this abundant forgiveness of God for them, is, (1.) Seriously to consider the nature and aggravations of their sin, particularly of their indwelling lusts, their legality and unbelief, as rebellion against and trampling on a God of infinite mercy and grace, and a murdering of the great God their Saviour;—to consider *HOW*, and *BY WHOM* this forgiveness is provided, purchased and offered to them in the gospel,—and how wretched their condition is, that want it; and how honourable to God, and pleasant and easy for them, the terms of it are;—to consider, how wide the only door of salvation is opened to them in the gospel invitations and offers;—and how infinitely well suited to their case; and how safe, full, and free, this forgiveness is, as founded on the love, the covenant, the oath and blood of God;—and in fine, consider the nature, causes and ends of an actual interest in, and possession of it. (2.) Renouncing all their false confidences, and abhorring themselves, in their own sight, for all their abominations, particularly their contempt and unbelief of gospel forgiveness, and the sins which peculiarly burden their conscience,—earnestly to embrace Jesus Christ as their atoning sacrifice and prince exalted to give repentance and remission of sins, together with pardon, acceptance, sanctification and comfort in him,—as fully, freely, earnestly and indefinably offered and given to them by an infinitely gracious God, in the promises of the gospel, John iii. 14,—16. 1 Tim. i. 15. 1 John iii. 23.

Though a *particular distinct assurance* of actual interest in, and possession of this forgiveness, be attainable and profitable,—and, though it be ordinarily, if not alway, men's sin that they want it, yet there may be a real and saving discovery and reception of it by faith, where it is not, Rom. v. 1,—5.

sa. l. 10. Acts xiii. 38, 39. Even this obscure discovery of divine forgiveness, and indistinct, though really appropriating persuasion of it, is inconceivably useful,—as it disposeth the soul to forsake all false and insufficient methods of relief,—and to resign itself wholly to the mercy of God, and wait on him alone in the use of means for forgiveness, notwithstanding all discouragements to the contrary. It begets a loving of God in the soul, and a delight in dealing with him; and removes the terror arising from his holiness and justice, and the greatness of the person's sin. It produceth a true knowledge, and high valuation of the promises of pardon, a cordial readiness to hearken to them, as directed to him in particular, Hos. xiv. 3. Joel ii. 13, 14. Lam. iii. 25, 29. Psalm lxxiii. 1, 28. Isa xxviii. 16. Acts xiii. 26. 1 Tim. i. 15.

As all true faith of divine forgiveness, renders sin more odious and lothsome, inflames the heart with redeeming love believed,—leads away from sin, self and the world to Jesus Christ for all, and renders holiness delightful,—and a presumptuous belief of it renders sin light, leads to self confidences, and to sinful indulgences,—they, who have only the latter, ought seriously to consider the infinite danger of dealing deceitfully with God in this matter, search out, and be deeply affected with the evidences of it,—ponder, how hardening it is to their heart, and how quickly death may cut them off in it, and in consequence hereof, practise as above directed, Lam. iii. 40.

In order that weak, unstable and distressed believers may attain to establishment and comfort in the Lord's way, it is necessary, (1) That they make the Spirit of God in his word, not themselves, the *supreme Judge* of their state and condition, Isa. viii. 20. 2 Pet. i. 19. (2.) That they carefully remember, that, however clearly their sins be marked in their afflictions, and however much they disquiet their

their spirits, yet they are nowise inconsistent with the love of God, Heb. xii. 6.—11. Rev. iii. 19. (3.) They ought to consider, that a deep sense of sin, sorrow, and self abhorrence for it, together with many fears, temptations, and even falls into acts of sin are consistent with a justified state, and an assurance of it, both by faith and spiritual sense, Psalm lxxv. 3. Rom. vii. 14,—25. and viii. 2. (4.) They must carefully distinguish between unbelief, which weakens their heart, discourageth them from religious performances, or makes them proud of their work,—and an holy jealousy, which leads to an high esteem of, and cleaving to Christ, and enlivens in duty. (5.) They ought carefully to distinguish between saving faith and spiritual sense,—studying alway to believe the love of God and the remission of their sins upon the footing of his faithful promise, in order to their enjoying the sensible experience of them; but never to seek sensible experiences in order to be a foundation of their faith, 2 Chron. xx. 20. Isa. vii. 9. Psalm cxix. 49. (6.) They ought never to indulge complaining of their distress, instead of an active endeavouring to embrace Jesus Christ in the free promise of the gospel, in order to overcome difficulties, and grow in grace, (7.) They ought earnestly to watch against all rash and unbecoming expressions concerning God and his dispensations towards them; or even concerning their own state and condition;—or, which may discourage others from religion, Psal. lxxvii. 10. and lxxiii. 15. (8.) They ought to consider, what fearful distress other saints, and especially what Christ hath suffered, and how delightful and glorious the issue, 1 Cor. x. 13. 1 Pet. iv. 1, 2. Heb. xii. 1.—4. (9.) They ought to remember, that the application of Christ as offered in the gospel, in answerableness to their case, is the sovereign, and all sufficient remedy in every distress; and that every

every thing else, to which they can be justly directed, amounts to no more than an introduction to, or improvement of this, 1 Cor. i. 30. Col. iii. 11. (10.) They ought to ponder and try, by experience, how delightfully a believing assurance of God's forgiveness and favour promotes their delight in him, and the duties of holiness, and casts out slavish fears, enables them solidly to hope for everlasting happiness, and singly to suffer for his cause, 2 Cor. v. 14, 15. Gal. ii. 20. and vi. 14. (11.) They ought to consider, that a perseverant waiting on God, for the fulfilment of his promises, is necessary to their spiritual peace, comfort, and establishment in his way, Heb. x. 36, 37. Psalm xxvii. 14. Job xxxv. 14. Isa. xxx. 18. (12.) In deep plunges of darkness and distress, self-examination is often improper at first hand, as the issue of it bids fair to add to their affliction; but they ought, as persons *eminently sinful and miserable*, to apply Jesus Christ as represented and offered in the *most plain and extensive promises of the gospel*, which will enable them to a clear and kindly trial of their state, Mark v. 36. John xi. 25, 26, 40. (13.) They ought, by faith, to catch at the smallest appearances of God's pardoning and saving mercy as held forth in his word, Psal. lxxxv. 8. A contrary conduct provokes him to continue their distress. (14.) They ought to believe divine pardon and acceptance, and other blessings, as granted upon the account of Christ's righteousness alone, exclusive of all their works,—and as freely offered and given in the gospel,—and build all their holy obedience on that foundation, Eph. i. 7. Col. i. 14. Luke i. 74, 75. 2 Cor. v. 14, 15. 1 Cor. vi. 19, 20. (15.) Animated by this faith of full and free forgiveness, they ought earnestly to remove the causes of their perplexing distress, by an evangelical repentance of, and reformation from their sins, especially such as seem to be the immediate

ate ground of the Lord's controversy with them, Lam. iii. 40. Hos. xiv. 1,—3. 2 Cor. vii. 11.

V. Believers are often exercised with DOUBTS, relative to their state, case, or practice. Their doubts concerning their STATE arise from their want of deep convictions of sin ;—the confused manner, in which they, at first and afterward, received Jesus Christ and his salvation, in the free promises of the gospel ;—their having, before their conversion, enjoyed some common operations of the Spirit, which were very like to his saving work ;—and from their inattention to the frame of their soul, while it is attracted by the love of Christ ;—their sinful forgetfulness of that experience, which they enjoy ;—their want of due care to entertain God's sensible presence when they enjoy it ;—their untender walking before God, even under remarkable breathings of his Spirit ;—their resisting of the testimony of the Spirit by the gospel promise, in some remarkable time of need ;—their neglect of frequent and serious attempts to examine their own state and practice ;—or, their attempting to examine themselves, when their soul is in great disorder,—or examining themselves by marks not prescribed in scripture ; or which mark growth in grace, rather than the reality of it, —and their attempting to dig faith and holiness out of themselves, when they fear that they want it.

The grounds upon which believers often suspect *their state to be bad*, are—their falling into sin, gross sin, after they thought that the lust from which it proceeds, had been subdued ;—their inability to perceive their election, or believe the promises with particular appropriation ;—the short duration of their pleasant frames or sensible feelings of divine influence ;—the languor of their desires after Jesus Christ and his spiritual mercies ;—their great defect in humiliation and grief for sin ;—their sad inferiority to other saints in spiritual attainments and good works ;
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—the unlikeness of their afflictions, temptations, or desertion, to those of other saints ;—their levity and presumption in prosperity, or stupidity and dejection in adversity, —their inward corruption prevailing and raging more sensibly, than it did before they had any religious concern ;—their want of sensible growth in grace or good works ;—their being much influenced by mere moral suasion, or by legal hopes and fears, in the performance of religious duties ;—their want of sensible acquaintance with that spiritual fellowship with God, bold access to him, and delightful liberty before him, —or with the breathings of his Spirit, his hearing of their prayers, or, with the assurance of his love, the witnessing of his Spirit with their spirits, that they are the children of God, and sealing them up to the day of redemption ;—or with spiritual peace of conscience and joy in the Holy Ghost, which other saints have attained ;—and, in fine, their being much plagued with blasphemous thoughts, terrible deadness and wandering of heart, or even drowsiness of head in religious duties, —and relapsing into sins of which they had formerly repented, and the like.

In order to disentangle themselves from such doubts relative to their state, believers, in attempting believing views of the holy law of God, of his redeeming love, and the death of his Son, ought to consider, how grievous and aggravated their sinning against all these must be ;—they ought to stir up themselves to a renewed receiving of Jesus Christ by faith, as made of God to them wisdom, righteousness, sanctification and redemption, answerable to their ignorance, guilt, pollution and bondage ;—and in consequence hereof, bitterly to bewail their imperfection before God, and humble themselves on account of them. They ought seriously to consider, That manifold sinful infirmities may consist with the truth of grace ;—that a self loathing sense of their unworthiness and sinful plagues, is a good

evidence of a renewed heart ;—that it is not in their own, but in the righteousness of the infinitely worthy Lord Jesus Christ, that we are accepted before God ;—that there are weak as well as strong saints in God's family ;—that it is not the prevalence, but the reign of indwelling lusts, nor the commission even of gross acts of sin, but the living with pleasure in sin, that is inconsistent with real grace ;—that hearty struggling against raging lusts and loathing themselves on account of them, are as certain evidences of a gracious state as many victories over them ;—that the blood of Jesus Christ cleanseth from all sin ;—that sensible frames are not to be judged of by their duration, but by their sin embittering, self abasing, and Christ exalting influence ;—that they are incapable of judging, whether their case be worse than that of other saints ;—that apprehensions of uncommon sinfulness and trouble, ought not to make them reckon all that they have met with, delusive, but stir them up to a present and earnest application of Jesus Christ in answerableness to their need ;—that indwelling lusts frequently rage with more sensible violence after regeneration, than they did before, when they had nothing to oppose them ;—that the spiritual light and life of believers make them often apprehend the motions of their lusts more violent when they are not really so ;—that even the strongest saints are often fearfully tempted by Satan, harassed with blasphemous and atheistical thoughts, and burdened with afflictions,—and instead of sensible fellowship with God, tasting of his loving kindness, and living in inward quietness and joy,—do much walk in darkness, having no light, Rom. vii. 14,—24. Isa. l. 10.

As through the confusion and darkness in which Satan involves men's souls, in their attempts to examine themselves,—through the weakness of many real motions of indwelling grace,—and the many counterfeits of holiness in heart and life,—and their own slavish fears of being deceived, or of their being absolutely graceless,

graceless, if not for ever abandoned to their lusts,—true believers often find great difficulty in examining themselves. It is necessary to their obtaining clear and distinct assurance of their in-being in Christ, that the Spirit of God witness with their spirits. This he doth by directing them to, and causing them rightly understand the discriminating marks of saintship exhibited in scripture;—by invigorating and thus rendering their inward habits and acts of grace discernible;—by enabling their conscience faithfully to compare these gracious habits and acts with the discriminating marks, and judge and declare, how the one answers to the other;—and by confirming the testimony of their conscience, with a powerful application of some gospel promise, as *I am the Lord thy God*, and making them embrace it by a lively and vigorous acting of faith, Rom. viii. 16, 26. 1 Cor. ii. 12, 15. 1 Thess. i. 5.

Believers often mistake with respect to their spiritual condition, (1.) In thinking their case to be GOOD when it is BAD;—as when they please themselves in leaving their first love;—when, under pretext of charity, they connive at other men's sins;—when they are tickled with the prevalence of fleshly lusts;—when they please themselves in lukewarmness in the things of God, or rest on carnal confidences—in spiritual frames, gifts, graces, or other created enjoyments;—when they are charmed with the religious-like and comforting enchantments of Satan;—when they please themselves in an erring conscience, or in uncommon, though rash zeal or boldness in prayer.—For REMEDY of this mistake, they ought seriously to consider, That God searcheth their heart, and is acquainted with all their ways;—that they ought only to rest in his sentence declared in his word;—that, if Christ infinitely loved them and gave himself for them, it must be infinitely criminal and shameful for them to cool in their love to him, or any way backslide from him; that self indulgence in a bad case is inexpressibly sinful

and dangerous ;—that turning of God's grace into any form or degree of licentiousness, is a fearful token of being divinely given up to their lusts ;—that it is most dreadful to have conscience, that deputy of God, so perverted as to draw them into rebellion against him, under pretence of his own authority ; that remarkable appearances of liberty in prayer or preaching may proceed from the novelty or self-invention of the opinion or conduct, —even while men are praying or preaching, in correspondence to the most wicked lusts, Rev. ii. 3, 23. Jude 4. 1 Tim. iv. 3. 2 Cor. xi. 14.

(2.) In thinking their case **BAD**, when it is really **GOOD** —as in thinking their true peace of conscience but *carnal security* ;—their assurance of faith *presumption* ;—their holy zeal *carnal stiffness* ;—their tenderness of conscience *nice scrupulosity* ;—their tenderness of heart in religious exercises a *natural softness* of temper ;—their earnest prayer *hypocritical dissimulation* ;—their Christian charity *rash folly and indulgence*. —**FOR REMEDY** of these mistakes, they ought to humble themselves before God, on account of the imperfection of all their spiritual frames and exercises ;—they ought to flee to Jesus Christ and his righteousness exhibited in the gospel, as the **ALONE** ground of their confidence with God ;—and to improve their own apprehended imperfections to stir up themselves to receive more abundant grace from his fulness, —and to labour in his strength to abound more and more in his work. In fine, they ought to remember, That, if their attainments and exercises be attended with prevalent humility and self loathing, distrust of their own heart, and cordial desire to glorify God, and an high esteem of Christ, they, however imperfect, are of a *truly gracious nature*, Phil. iii. 3, 8, — 14. Rom. vii. 14. — 24. 1 Pet. ii. 7.

Sometimes believers know *not what judgment to form concerning their spiritual condition*, —as, when their mind is full of confusion ;—when they want the frequent returns of spiritual joy ;—when they find their

sinful

sinful infirmities abounding ;—when they find liberty in secret prayer, and not in public, or in public, but not in secret or private ; when their afflictions are very heavy and lasting ;—when they know not the particular grounds of the Lord's controversy with them ;—when they cannot distinctly discern the increase of their mortification of sin ;—when they seem to be called to different duties at the same time ;—when, on account of their bad frame, they know not whether the performance or forbearance of a particular duty is like to be least sinful. —For REMEDY of this, they ought immediately to apply the blood of Jesus for the removal of that guilt from their conscience, which occasions this confusion in their mind ;—and, under a deep sense of their own weakness and ignorance, and singly aiming at the glory of God, to receive Jesus and his Spirit, in order to their obtaining further instruction and grace, Isa. l. 10.

Sometimes believers are anxiously doubtful, *What is the particular ground of the Lord's controversy with them.*—In order to find out THIS, they may observe—what sinful conduct they were employed in just before their trouble came ;—what sin the affliction seems most directly pointed against ;—what sin their conscience especially presents to them under their trouble :—They ought earnestly to supplicate the Lord, to shew them, Why he contendeth with them,—which may perhaps be what they think duty, as blind zeal, and its effects.——But, if they cannot find out the particular cause of their affliction, they ought earnestly to make application of Jesus' blood, as it cleanseth from all sin, known or unknown.

Believers also often doubt, *Whether their afflictions be sanctified or not.* In this case, applying Jesus' wounds, bruises, and infinite compassion and grace to their own soul, they ought carefully to observe, Whether these afflictions humble them before God,—drive them to Jesus Christ, as their all-sufficient physician, —lead them out to justify God,—submit to his will, and

and earnestly desire to have sin purged away by the trouble, rather than to have it removed, Psal. cxix. 67, 71. and xciv. 12. Lam. iii. 29. 2 Cor. xii. 19.

—Believers are often exercised with doubts respecting their practice, *What is right or wrong?* What is the proper manner of doing that which they know to be duty? Whether it be proper to attempt such a particular duty, when their heart is in so bad a frame? —In such a case, they ought to make an earnest application of Jesus' blood and Spirit for removing that sin which procured this perplexity and badness of frame;—and, under an humble sense of their weakness, singly aiming at the glory of God, and impartially searching the scriptures,—to apply to Jesus Christ as their light and life, to instruct and enable them to that which is duty in the proper season of it. They ought faithfully and speedily to perform their duty, as far as they can discern it. They ought to deny SELF, having no confidence in their own wisdom as their *guide*,—no regard to their own will or affections as their *rule*, *reason*, or *motive*,—no reliance on their own strength, even of grace received, to enable them to perform duty,—no dependence on their own worth as a *ground* of their acceptance with God,—no regard to their own honour, profit or pleasure, as their *chief end*; For, if self prevail, it will corrupt their whole work, however lawful in itself, and deprive them of the divine reward of it,—and will insensibly sway, or by fear, or flattery, silence and bribe their conscience to call evil good and good evil, 1 Cor. i. 24, 30. Prov. iii. 5, 6. Mat. xvi. 24.

CHAP. IV.

*Casistical Hints concerning a CHRISTIAN WALK,
in—living by faith on Christ ;—in fellowship with
God ;—in spiritual mindedness ;—keeping of the
heart ;—keeping a conscience void of offence ;—right
behaviour under trouble and death.*

A Christian conversation must be a **WALKING**
IN CHRIST, a **LIFE OF FAITH** upon him.
He must be the foundation and matter of all our com-
fort and furniture for it,—the *source*, the *motive*, the
pattern and *end* of it,—and the *altar*, on which all,
that we do in it, must be presented to, and accepted
by God.—In this life of faith, there must be (1.)
Spiritual knowledge proceeding from, and leading to,
Christ ;—*knowledge of ourselves*,—of the plagues of
our heart, and their diversified conditions,—of our
deficiency in grace and comfort,—of our weakness and
mistakes in all that we do,—of our temptations, trou-
bles and mercies,—in order that we, sensible of our
extensive and extreme need of Christ, may be shut
up to a receiving out of his fulness ;—*knowledge of*
Christ himself, in his person, natures, names, offices,
relations, states and works, as infinitely excellent in
themselves, and suitable to our diversified circumstan-
ces ;—*knowledge of the covenant of grace* and dispen-
sation of it, as divinely and freely making over Christ
and all that he is, and hath, answerably to our need,
John xvi. 8,—14. John xvii. 3. 1 John v. 20. (2.)

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As an uniting with Christ by faith must lay the foundation of it, so a perseverant cleaving to his person, as, in its mediatory offices and work, made of God to us *wisdom, righteousness, sanctification and redemption*, is constantly necessary to our life of faith, Acts xi. 23. Phil. iii. 8,—14. (3) Every circumstance in our case, and every thing respecting Christ, as represented and offered in the gospel, must be improved by faith into an application of him answerably to our need. A life of faith is a continued flight from sin and self to Jesus Christ manifested in the gospel and covenant of grace, as ALL IN ALL for removal of our guilt, mortification of our lusts, resistance of temptations, relief from troubles, steadfastness in the truth, growth in grace, abounding in comfort, and entrance into glory.

In order to enjoy *spiritual comfort*, founded on union to, and justification through Christ, we must, by faith acting upon his own infallible word of the gospel, in which he is exhibited and offered ;—improve him as a *divine root* from which every good thing proceeds ;—as the *Mediator* of the new covenant, in whom alone God blesseth with all spiritual blessings ;—as *one with us in law and by spiritual marriage*, and so an infallible security against our condemnation, and all-sufficient mean of our eternal happiness in himself ;—as the *Lord our righteousness* before God, the price of all our grace and glory,—the infallible re-establisher of our perfect peace and familiar fellowship with him. We must improve his *divine nature*, as an unbounded fountain of, and unchangeable preservative in blessedness,—his *manhood* as the mean of our union to, and communion with his person, and of his fraternal sympathy with us, and pledge and medium of our everlasting fellowship with God ;—his *offices*, as, and to be infallibly executed for promoting our spiritual comfort, sanctification, and eternal happiness,—his *relations* of Husband, Father, Brother, Friend, Shepherd, Captain, &c. to be for ever implemented in infinite kindness

ness suited to our need, or highest felicity ;—his *gracious names and excellencies* to be for ever verified in his dealings with us ;—his *words* to be all fulfilled for, and in us ;—his *works* of undertaking for us, assuming our nature, obeying, dying, rising again, ascending to his Father's right hand, intercession, offering of himself to us in the gospel, striving with our conscience, enlightening, renewing or refreshing our hearts, management of his church, and of the world as connected with her, and returning to judgment,—as all intended for, and powerfully promoting our real and everlasting welfare,—his *fullness*, as lodged in him, and certainly dispensed by him for men, yea, for the rebellious, Phil. iii. 3. and iv. 4. 2 Cor. ii. 14. Luke i. 47.

To improve him as exhibited, offered and given to us in the gospel, for sanctification, is, by faith in his word, to cleave to his *person*, as full of grace and truth, a storehouse of true holiness for us ;—to improve his *blood* as the remover of the curse of the broken law, which is the strength of sin ;—the price of our sanctification, which renders God's bestowal of it due to us,—the purger of our conscience from dead works, —and our all powerful motive to imitate him in holiness ;—to improve his divine nature, as full of infinite wisdom, power and love, to change us into his own image from glory to glory,—his *human nature* as a pledge and pattern of his conformation of us to himself, and making us partakers of a *divine nature*, —to improve his *prophetical office*, as to be infallibly executed in effectually applying to us his sanctifying truths,—his *priesthood*, as purchasing and procuring all grace and glory for us, and encouraging us to ask and hope for it,—his *kingly office*, to be executed in subduing us to himself, and in ruling and defending us, and in restraining and conquering all our enemies, that he may render us without spot or wrinkle. Thus every thing in Christ, and in God, as in him, is to be

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improven by faith, as securities for, sources of, motives to, and patterns in our sanctification of nature and life, Eph. iv; v. Col. iii. 1 Pet. ii; iii; iv.

II. In their constant exercise of faith on Christ, believers ought to maintain FAMILIAR FELLOWSHIP WITH GOD. This includes (1.) *Mutual communication*. God, as reconciled in Christ, through his word and ordinances, conveys himself and his fulness to them; and they give up themselves, as *foolish, guilty, polluted, empty, weak, and wretched*,—to him, that he may manifest on, and in them the exceeding riches of his grace,—and they may receive what he bestows, according to the tenor of his new covenant, Acts xx 35. and xiii. 34. Psalm cxvi. 10,—16. (2.) *Mutual converse*. God, by his word, declares to them their sins, their danger, their events, their duty,—his doctrines of grace respecting them,—his covenant with them,—his purposes and deeds of love for, and to them,—his abundant fulness for their supply, and his infinite readiness to bestow it upon them: and they speak to him in confessing their faults, supplicating his favours, and thanking him for the mercies bestowed or promised, Psalm l. 7. and lxxxv. 8. Isa. i. 18. and xliii. 24, 25 and xliv. 22. Hos. xiv. 2,—3. Psalm ciii; cxvi. and xviii. 1,—3. (3.) *Joint walking*. While he directs, assists, protects, and shines on them; they, in love to, and dependence on him, exercise all their implanted graces in attending to every divine ordinance, and obeying every commanded duty.—Thus, in obedience to God's commandments, and aiming at his glory, they, by faith, draw virtue from Christ and God in him, as exhibited in the gospel, and exert it in the exercise of hope, love, repentance, humility, temperance, zeal, patience.—They receive gospel ordinances, as means appointed by God reconciled in Christ, for meeting with, and manifesting, and conveying himself and his fulness to sinful men:—and aiming at his glory, and depending on his grace conveyed, they attend them, seeking

seeking for him, and receiving out of his abundance every necessary grace and comfort.—In the duties of their common calling, they receive their opportunities of, and abilities for their work, as granted in kindness by him,—and in obedience to him, and chiefly aiming at his glory, and depending on his direction, help and success, they labour in it:—and meanwhile improve what they are versant about, as means of discovering God himself, and leading forth their hearts to him, as the fountain of all good.—In order to this walking with God, he and they must have Jesus Christ for their *one way*, and his glory in the eternal welfare of men for their *one end*; and he must give them skill, strength, and courage to walk with him, in a proper manner, Mic. vi. 8. Psal. xvi. 8, 9. and xxiii. 4. 1 Cor. vii. 24. Amos iii. 3. John xiv. 6.

As all the three divine persons distinctly bear witness to believers concerning Christ,—bestow distinct blessings upon them, and are represented as distinctly, tho' not separately worshipped by them, 1 John v. 7. 2 Cor. xiii. 14. 1 John i. 3, 7. John xiv. 1. Rev. i. 4, —7. Matth. ix. 38. with Acts xx. 28. 2 Thess. iii. 5.—they ought to hold distinct, though *not separate*, fellowship with each of these persons,—with the Father in his LOVE,—with the Son in his personal and purchased GRACE,—and with the Holy Ghost, in his INHABITATION and INFLUENCE, 1 John iv. 8, 9. 10. 2 Cor. xiii. 14. John xvi. 26, 27. Rom. v. 5. John i. 14, 16, 18. and xvi. 8,—14.—Each of the divine persons act in every communication of grace to believers: the Father bestows all the grace which they receive, as by origin: authority: the Son forms a treasure of purchased grace, and conveys that which is lodged in him as a Trustee for men: and the Holy Ghost as Executor of Jesus' testament, and applier of his purchased redemption transmits it from his fullness into their heart, John v. 21. and vi. 44. Matth. xvii. 5. Isa. liii. 10, 11, 12. Matth. xxviii. 18. John xvi. 13, 14. Rom. viii. 11, 13, 14. Phil. iv. 19.

(1.) The Father holds communion with believers in the declarations of his undeserved, preventing, infinite, unchangeable and everlasting love, in his word,—and in bestowing the fruits of it upon them. And they hold communion with him in believing and receiving his love,—and in gratefully returning their infinitely well deserved and consequential, but weak and inconstant, and increasing love to him. Jer. xxxi. 3. 1 John iii. 1. and iv. 9, 10. Psal. xviii. 1. and cxvi. 1. To believe and receive the Father's love, is, in, and through his own word, to view, and be persuaded of its eternity, freedom, immutability, infinity,—its distinguishing nature, fixing upon, and tendency toward them;—to discern the new covenant and all its promises, the gospel in all its declarations, offers and invitations,—all saving mercies, and all dispensations of providence, as pregnant with this love to them, and kindly to embrace them on that account — To render cordial and grateful returns of love to him, is, under the influence of the true faith and spiritual sensation of his love to them,—highly to esteem, delight in, desire after, and study familiarity with him,—earnestly study an unlimited obedience to all his commandments, and submission to all his dispensations, making an ardent and disinterested love to him the spring, motive, and matter of their whole practice, religious or civil, 1 John iv. 16.—19. Matth. xxii. 37.—Thus, while his love to them is a love of rest and complacency in them, theirs is a love of satisfaction with and rest in him. While his love vents itself in blessing them with all spiritual, temporal, and eternal blessings in Christ Jesus,—theirs returns to him, through Christ, in the exercise of grace and performance of holy obedience, Zeph. iii. 17. Psal. cxvi. 7. Eph. i. 3. 1 Pet. iii. 16. and ii. 5. and iv. 11.—But, they must carefully beware of looking on their love to him as any ground of their believing his love to them; as this would overturn the whole plan of redemption, and exalt them above him. But, must first

first in order believe his love as manifested and offered in the gospel to them *as sinful men*, that, by its almighty influence, their natural enmity against him may be slain, and their heart inflamed and melted with love to him, 1 Tim. i. 13,—17. 1 John iv. 9, 10, 16, 19.

Such communion with the Father in his love, is of *unspeakable advantage*, as it will exceedingly enlear him to us, open for us a delightful prospect into the mystery of our redemption; renders us chearful in all holy obedience, exalt our mind above the world, and render it easy under all the possible hatred, reproach, or persecution of men, 1 John iv. 8,—19.

(2.) To mark the distinct fellowship of believers with Jesus Christ, he is represented as *coming into*, and *supping with them*, *walking among*, or *in them*, *delighting in*, *rejoicing over*, and *talking to them*;—and they as *lying in his bosom*, *sitting under his shadow*, and *eating his fruit*, Rev. iii. 20. Prov. viii. 31. Song i,—viii.

In his *personal grace*, which consists in his infinite comeliness and dignity, and his manifold relations, to endear and attract;—his infinite fitness to save, in respect of natures, offices, and their connection,—and his fulness answerable to, and sufficient for all their need, Song v. 10,—16. 1 Tim. iii. 16. Isa. ix. 6. Col. i. 15,—18. John i. 14. 1 Cor. i. 30.—Christ holds communion with believers (1.) In his *complacential continuance* in every endearing relation of *husband*, *father*, *friend*, and the like, to them, and delighting in them, as the objects of his distinguishing love,—his Father's gift,—the purchase of his own blood, and begotten again by his Spirit, Song iii. 11. Isa. lxii. 5. and liv. 5, 6. John xiii. 1. Psalm ii. 8. John vi. 37. and xv. 13, 14. Isa. liii. 10,—12. (2.) In his *delighting in shewing kindness* to them,—in interceeding for them,—manifesting his person, righteousness and grace to them,—revealing his promises, pardons, mysteries, and purposes to them,—and enabling them to open their mind and disburden themselves of all their guilt, trouble, care, and grief, by laying it upon him, Psal.

xxv. 14. Matth. xiii. 11. Rom. viii. 26, 27. Heb. iv. 14,—16. Phil. iv. 6. 1 Pet. v. 7. Psal. lv. 22. (3.) In *high and distinguished valuation* of them, manifested in his undertaking for them,—assuming their nature,—obeying and suffering even unto death, in their stead,—and in his care to keep and manage them and all their concerns,—in prizing their company and converse,—resenting the injuries done to them, often doing good to others for their sake, Jer. xxx. 21. Psalm xl. 6,—8. Heb. ii. 14 —16. Phil. ii. 6,—8. Isa. liiii. 4, 5. and xliii. 3, 4. Matth. xxiv. 22. and xxv. 34,—45. (4.) In *constant and tender compassion* towards them,—kindly grieving together with them,—graciously and readily supporting and assisting them in their temptations and troubles,—earnestly and continually interceding for them, particularly in special times of need;—preventing their falling when in utmost danger,—cutting off temptations when they become too strong for them,—or proportionally increasing their spiritual strength;—directing them to an holy and profitable improvement of temptations;—recovering them from sinful falls by pardon, gracious manifestations and supplies,—limiting their afflictions, and causing them all work for their good,—and punishing such as trouble them, Heb. iv. 15. and ii. 17, 18. Isa. lxiii. 9. Zech. i. 12. and ii. 8. Gen. xxxix. 7,—9. Psalm xciv. 18. 2 Pet. ii. 9. 2 Cor. xii. 7,—9. 1 Pet. i. 6. 1 John ii. 1, 2. Isa. lxiii. 4. (5.) In his *exercise of infinite bounty and liberality* towards them,—faithfully executing all his saving offices for, and in them,—fully acting up to all his new-covenant relations and characters of mercy and goodness,—and thus bestowing upon them whatever conviction, instruction, peace, pardon, grace, glory, or even earthly enjoyments they need. Psal. lxxxiv. 11. and xxxiv. 8,—10. Phil. iv. 19. Heb. xiii. 5.

Correspondent to this fellowship of Christ with them, believers hold fellowship with him (1.) In their *continued resignation of themselves* to him, as their alone spiritual husband, endeared to them in every respect,

—*as God*, possessed of infinite excellency, and filled with unbounded, eternal and unchangeable grace and love to them,—*as man*, free from all pollution and defect, and filled with grace and truth to an inconceivable degree,—*as Godman*, infinitely well qualified to be their Mediator, and to act in their stead, and to be an unbounded and inexhaustible fountain of grace and glory to them,—*as highly exalted* above all principalities and powers, and possessed of all authority in heaven and earth,—*as altogether lovely* in his names, natures, person, offices, relations, undertaking, life, death, resurrection, and coming to judgment; and in his glory, majesty, grace, power, wisdom, holiness, equity and faithfulness,—*as one*, in whom *all the perfections and excellencies of God shine forth, as manifested, and to be for ever manifested* for the inexpressible benefit of sinful men, particularly themselves,—and in whom are hid all the treasures of wisdom, and knowledge, and grace for them, John x. 13. Luke i. 35. John iii. 24. Isa. ix. 6. Phil. ii. 9,—11. Song v. 10,—16. Col. i. 15,—23, 27. (2.) In *believing and admiring his delight* in them, and in *delighting in him*, rejoicing in his person, offices, relations and works,—delighting in, and care to enjoy his gracious and sensible presence,—holy uneasiness under his absence,—and earnest desiring, seeking, and crying for his return, Song ii. 16, 17. and i. 4, 13. and viii. 6, 7. and iii. v. (3.) In *believing and admiring his esteem* of them, and in *manifesting their high esteem* of him, as infinitely more excellent, necessary and suitable to them, than all persons and things on earth, life, frames and graces not excepted,—and in their readiness to part with all sinful pleasures or earthly enjoyments for his sake, Gal. ii. 20. Psal. cxxxvi. 23. Song v. 10,—16. Acts xx. 24. Phil. iii. 7.—9. Psalm lxxiii. 25, 26. (4.) In *believing and admiring his compassion* to them, and encouraging themselves in it under temptations and troubles,—and in *grief and pain* when he is dishonoured and his interests injured,—in keeping their heart chaste for him alone,
—admit-

—admitting nothing into it for the purposes for which they received him, in his person, righteousness and grace,—in cherishing the comforting and sanctifying influences of his Spirit,—and in exact adherence to, and lively attendance on the instituted ordinances of his worship, Phil. iii. 8, 9. Psalm lxxiv. 1—21. and li. 18, 19. 1 Thess. v. 19. Ezek. xlii. 11, 12. Luke i. 6. (5.) In a ready, humble, and hearty reception of his undeserved favours,—in endeavouring to abound in a grateful sense of, and obediential returns to his kindness, earnest studying and increasing in holiness of heart and life flowing from him as its author and principle, exemplified in his pattern, enforced by motives of his love and blood,—as accepted in him as Mediator, and as an obedience due to him as God's great deputy, and as God equal with the Father, Psal. cxvi. 12, 16. and ii. 12. John xv. 11. Phil. i. 29. 2 Cor. v. 14. Rev. v. 9,—14.

In his purchased grace, Christ holds communion with believers, not only in paying the price of it, in his obedience and suffering, and in procuring the bestowal of it upon them by his word and Spirit, in his ever prevalent intercession,—to which their reception of his righteousness and blessings and their prayers of faith do correspond, Heb. vii. 25, and iv. 14,—16. But more particularly, (1.) In their justification. In his fulfilling a law magnifying righteousness in their stead,—in receiving the justifying sentence primarily in his own person as their representative and Surety, in his resurrection,—in his applying his righteousness to them, in their union to his person, and thus extending that sentence to them, as his spouse and members—in intimating it to them in his gospel promise,—and in giving his Spirit to apply it to their conscience, Rom. viii. 3, 4. Acts v. 31. Rom. iv. 25. Isa. liii. 11. (2.) In their adoption. Being the eternal Son of God and their brother in one person,—the heir of all things, and first born among many brethren, he graciously translates those

those that are given to him by his Father, from the family of Satan and the world into that of God, frees them from their sinful and legal bondage, and enables them, from a principle of spiritual life, to serve God with pleasure and gladness,—and gives them as his children and younger brethren a spiritual right to his sacraments, graces and comforts, and to the good things of this life, and to eternal happiness, nay to God himself as their everlasting portion, Psal. lxxxix. 26. Heb. i. 2. John i. 12. Gal. iii. 13, 14, 29. and iv. 4,—6. Rom. viii. 2. Heb. xii. 3,—11. (3.) In their *sanctification*. According to his Father's appointment, he, by his Spirit, and ordinarily through his word, conveys from himself a new nature into them, and, by repeated applications of his Spirit and blood, preserves, strengthens and increaseth the habits of grace in them, and by actual communications of light and power, directs, animates, and enables them to repress the motions, and mortify the lusts of indwelling corruption,—and to abound in gospel holiness, in opposition thereto,—and at last presents them perfectly holy and unblemished before God, Tit. ii. 14. John xvi. 7,—13. and i. 16. Eph. v. 25,—27. (4.) In their *spiritual comfort*. His person, offices, relations, words, and works, are the great source and matter of it,—and by discovering himself and his fulness, he creates it in them, Luke ii. 5. Isa. li. 7,—12. and lvii. 18,—20.

Correspondent to this fellowship of Christ with them, believers hold communion with him, (1.) In *justification*, renouncing all their own righteousness as filthy rags before God,—considering, approving, applying, and rejoicing in his righteousness alone, as every way fitted to promote the honour of God's infinite wisdom, holiness and mercy, the exaltation of Christ as Mediator, and their eternal peace and happiness,—and in a believing approbation of God's laying their sin on Christ, and accepting his righteousness as an all sufficient covering for their souls, and in receiving and resting on God's promise of justification, as made to themselves,

selves,—and in meditating on, and improving their glorious privilege, as an effectual source, and invincible reason of abounding in true holiness of heart and life, Isa. lxiv. 6. and xlv. 24, 25. 2 Cor. v. 14, 15.

(2.) In *adoption*,—in cordially accepting this freely bestowed privilege, and hence forgetting their father's house and their own people,—believing and admiring the love of God which is manifested in it,—and in receiving the comforts, cherishing the hopes, submitting to the corrections, and with filial fear and love performing the duties which pertain to that honourable station of sonship to God, Psalm xlv. 10. 1 John iii. 1,—3. Heb. xii. 6,—11, 28.

(3.) In *sanctification*,—in heartily receiving it as an unspeakable privilege purchased with his blood, promised in his word, and produced by his Spirit;—and under a deep and affecting sense of the vileness of their nature and works,—applying his blood to their conscience, and praying for his Spirit to sanctify and cleanse them;—and in making Christ and his Spirit, dwelling in their heart, their great principle;—his example their pattern, his law their rule, his love their motive, his promise their encouragement, and his honour their end, his righteousness the foundation of their acceptance,—labouring to perfect holiness in both heart and life, Psal. li. Phil. iii. 7,—14. Luke i. 74, 75.

(4.) In *spiritual comfort*,—running to him under all their grievances,—and improving whatever he is to them, and what he hath done, or will do for and to them, as grounds of comfort,—and rejoicing in his word, ordinances, graces, and people, on his account, Isa. lxi. 10. and xxv. 10.

(3.) The Holy Ghost, being sent, given and poured out upon believers, holds distinct fellowship with them. In respect of his personal presence, he constantly abides with, and dwells in them. In respect of agency, he voluntarily, freely, and powerfully teacheth and brings to their remembrance, the holy law of God, and their transgressions of it in their heart and life, he shows them the things of Christ, and applies to them that righteousness,

righteousness, mercy, pardon, peace, acceptance, grace, and comfort, which are in him. He, thro' the promises, persuades them of God's everlasting love to them, and bears witness with their spirits, that they are the children of God; and as an earnest and first fruit of eternal happiness, seals them up to the day of redemption; he animates and enables them to pray over, and apply the promises of the new covenant, and through them draw wisdom and strength, cheerfully to walk before God, in all new and holy obedience, John xiv. 16, 17, 26. and xv. 26. and xvi. 7. — 14. Rom. v. 5. and viii. 16, 26, 27. Eph. i. 13, 14. and iv. 30. Zech. xiii. 10.

Believers hold communion with the Holy Ghost in his *inhabitation and influences*,—in cordially receiving him as the free and infinitely valuable gift of God, and messenger of Father and Son, in the work of man's redemption;—in taking heed not to grieve him by indulgence of carnal or lifeless frames, acts of unbelief, or other like sins;—in praying for, cherishing, and highly prizing, and readily yielding to his diversified influence;—in meditating much on the law of God, by which he convinceth men of sin, righteousness and judgment,—and on the doctrines, promises and invitations of the gospel, by which he comforts and draws them to Christ;—in humbling themselves before him for their sinful miscarriages towards him;—trusting in him for the compleating of his work of grace in them;—in earnestly thanking him for his favours, and endeavouring, under his influence, to abound in comfort and holiness, 1 Thess. i. 6. Eph. iv. 30. Psal. i. 2. 1 Cor. xv. 58. 2 Cor. vii. 1.

In order to their comfortable fellowship with the Spirit of God, it is necessary, that believers learn to distinguish between *his influences*, and *those of Satan*, which resemble them. The influences of the Holy Ghost lead men to Christ, in the word; and to self-loathing, and exalting of him;—and to an universal regard to both law and gospel for his sake;—and to an

earnest study of gospel holiness in all manner of conversation.—But Satanical convictions never make men see the exceeding sinfulness of sin, the evil of unbelief, legality and indwelling corruption of nature.—and are apt to be attended with much confusion and terror, and to issue in sudden transitions to rapturous extasies, and they dispose men to shift impartial trial of themselves, and to flee farther from Christ. Satan's more kindly influences encourage pride and self-esteem, If he urges to religious duties, it is ordinarily when they are unreasonable or improper for us; or, he urgeth to perform one duty, in order to promote the neglect of another. Or, he urgeth to perform them in a wicked manner, or to a bad end. He labours to comfort men with their own good works, or with pleasant frames, or presumptuous embracement of promises,—and to make them rest on fancies and imaginations, instead of Christ. In short, all his influences tend to disparage Christ and exalt self, and sweeten some sin.

As Jesus Christ shed his blood and giveth his Spirit to promote our nearness to God: as God delights in fellowship with his people, promiseth to dwell with them, return to them, and bring them back to him, Eph. ii. 13, 18. and iii. 12. Rev. xxi. 3. Psal. lxxviii. 18,—22. all believers ought earnestly to labour after the enjoyment of habitual and familiar fellowship with God, which is either *more constant and imperceptible, or more occasional and sensible.*

(1.) God holds *more imperceptible fellowship* with believers in preserving them in their state of spiritual marriage union to Jesus Christ, and, in consequence hereof, in their regenerated, justified and adopted state, —and in bestowing upon them by his word and Spirit such convincing, quickening, supporting and strengthening influences as best answer this end, to the praise of his grace. Jer. xxxii. 39, 40. 1 Pet. i. 5. John x. 27,—29. and iv. 14. and vi. 35, 40, 47. 1 John v. 12. And, they hold it with him, in cleaving to Jesus Christ

as manifested and given in the gospel,—and under a real sense of self-emptiness, guilt and pollution, and a dissatisfaction with all created enjoyments, as insubstantial,—hungering and thirsting after him,—highly esteeming him, and, in the use of gospel ordinances, labouring to find and enjoy him as their ALL IN ALL,—and through him apprehending, highly prizing and trusting in God, and desiring and expecting that he, according to his perfections and promises, will bestow his favours upon them, Psalm xlii. 1, 2. Job xxiii. 3, 2 Chron. xx. 12. Psalm cxxx. 6, 7. Ezek. xxxvi. 25, —31. Psalm ci. 2. and cxxlii. Lam. iii. 26. Isa. l. 10, Hab. iii. 17, 18. Heb. x. 23, 36, 37. and iii. 14.

In order to retain and enlarge these quickening, directing and strengthening influences, received in fellowship with God, believers ought (1.) Seriously to consider, how valuable they are, as they proceed from his Spirit and love, through the blood of Christ, and are productive of their spiritual peace, honour and safety; how necessary they are to preserve from sinning under violent temptations, heavy afflictions, rage of indwelling lusts, want of inward comfort, or when attending gospel ordinances, or called to difficult duties;—and how hurtful it is to lose them in a great measure, and hard to recover them. (2.) Thankfully to acknowledge his gracious presence as an unspeakable mercy, and ascribe all the good about them, to his free grace. (3.)

To improve his influences in a more cordial and lively receiving and resting upon Jesus Christ and his promises,—in earnest prayer for farther influences,—in labouring to increase in love to, delight in, and esteem of God in Christ above all things,—in watching against every thing that may offend him,—in careful improvement of his ordinances,—in making his glory their chief end,—in submitting to his will in all things as good, may best for us,—and in abounding in all known duties in proportion to their importance, Song i.—viii. Psalm xviii; xlii; lxiii; cxvi; cxix, &c.

(21) *More*

(1.) *More sensible fellowship with God* hath permanent sanctifying effects; but the sensible impression of it is, after some time, unfelt, Song i.—viii. Psal. xxx. 6, 7. It is more readily bestowed upon believers,—about the time of their spiritual birth and marriage to Christ,—when they partake of his supper,—when they are called to some difficult service for him,—when they are much given to solemn prayer and fasting,—when they are entering into, or just delivered from some remarkable desertion, temptation, or affliction,—when they are under some heavy trouble, particularly persecution for Christ's sake—when they are near death, especially, if they have been in much darkness before, Jer. xxxi. 3. 2 Cor. xii. 1.—7. Dan. ix; x. Acts ii. 42, 46. Gen. xlviii. 3. 2 Sam. xxiii. 1.—5.

In these more sensible manifestations of himself, God holds communion with believers, in powerfully applying his word to their heart,—kindly convincing them of their ingratitude, apostacy, and rebellion against him;—in intimating to them, that all their iniquities are pardoned, and that he is their God, and thus solving all their doubts, and loosing all their bands;—in revealing to them the mysteries of redeeming love, and the glory that is reserved in heaven for them;—in assuring them by his promise, and by his pledge of powerful influences, that all their plagues shall be quickly healed, all their wants supplied, and spiritual enemies conquered, and that goodness and mercy shall follow them all the days of their life, and they shall be for ever with the Lord,—and in powerfully drawing out their heart to listen to, and boldly and closely apply his promises with great delight, Psalm lxxxv. 8. Jer. xxxi. 3. Mat. ix. 2. Gen. xlviii. 3. with xxviii. 13, 14. Rom. vii. 1.—5. 2 Tim. iv. 7, 8. In such sensible manifestations of himself, believers hold communion with God, in their fixed and attentive hearing of his voice,—ready and close application of his promises; and in receiving Jesus Christ, they humbly admire God's love, appropriate him as their God in Christ, and joyfully

joyfully surrender up themselves to be pardoned, sanctified and saved by him, burn with desire after him, and delight in him, and freely and fervently pour out their heart before him, in behalf of themselves, their friends, and his church, Psalm lxxxv. 8. Zech. xiii. 9. Psalm xxxvi. 7 and xci. 2. and cxvi. 16. Luke ii. 47, 48. Psal. lxiii. 1, — 8. Ezra ix. Neh. i. Dan. ix.

This kind of fellowship with God is distinguishable from the sweet delusions of Satan, by its self-humbling, Christ exalting, and universally sanctifying influence, Isa. vi. 5. Psalm lxxiii. 25, 26. and cxvi. 11, — 16. and cxix. 32. — It is granted to believers, to encourage and strengthen their faith; to wean their heart from this world, and the pleasures of sin; to prepare them for trouble and death; to give them foretastes of eternal happiness, and chiefly to manifest the riches of redeeming grace. — When believers enjoy it, they ought carefully to mark its nature and form, that the remembrance of it may be pleasant to them under after trials; gripe as firmly as possible the presented promises, and Christ in them, which will abide with them when their pleasant frame is gone; gratefully thank the Lord for his manifestation, and carefully beware of provoking him to withdraw it by their pride, idolizing of it, plunging themselves into worldly business or cares, and carnal company, or slipping into some known sin.

Believers often mistake with respect to fellowship with God. Some, through the influence of Satan's refined delusions, the natural liveliness of their animal spirits in religious duties, and through God's very gradual withdrawment of his presence, and their inattention to the frame of their heart, and finding satisfaction in other things, in his stead, think that they enjoy familiar fellowship with God when they do not, Judges xvi. 20. — Others, through the timorousness of their mind, and their imagining that spiritual poverty of soul, painful hungering and thirsting after Christ and God in him, are tokens of his absence; or, that the stirring

stirring of inward lusts, notwithstanding much opposition, the want of sensible growth in grace, and of that liveliness in God's service which they once had in his service and worship, manifest the withdrawment of his gracious influence. But it is no less certain, that God, to punish his people's misimprovement of his favours, and their apostacy from him, often wholly withdraws his sensible comforting influences, and instead thereof, afflicts them with sharp challenges and fearful frowns, Psal. vi ; x ; xiii ; lxxiii ; lxxvii ; lxxxviii ; and though he cannot, in a consistency with his everlasting love, infallible promise, unchangeable covenant with, and relations to them, or the existence of his image in them, totally withhold his supporting and sanctifying influences, yet he may render them so small as not to be discernible, and inward corruptions may seem to have the whole place and power in their heart, Psal. lxxiii. 1,---16. and lxxvii. 3,---9. Isa. lix. 2. and lxiii. 17.

God's withdrawment of measures of gracious influence away, and of sensible influence frequently, is owing to their apostacy from him, and occasions their further backsliding.——Their apostacy often begins in some refined abomination, such as idolatrous pride of, or resting in pleasant frames, gifts, graces, or ordinances, dispensed to their carnal taste,---or, in a surprize by Satan's temptation into some gross sin. Herein, unless God keep their conscience awake to feel his withdrawment as a fearful judgment, they become more and more unconcerned what the frame of their soul and manner of its exercise towards God be. Next perhaps, they neglect meditation and self examination, and perform secret prayer, as a task, in a formal, if not in a precipitant manner. They become unaffected with the dishonours done God by others, and inclined to throw themselves into temptation.---Having fallen, they shun reproof, excuse, extenuate, and at last defend their sin, and proceed from evil to worse.

God

God withdraws his sensibly comfortable influences from his people gradually, and, as it were, by different steps, as their conduct and the ends of his glory require. (1.) Sometimes he only diminisheth that inward joy and peace which they once enjoyed in hearing, believing, contemplating and appropriating his gracious words, excellencies, fulness and work, in respect of measure, frequency, or duration. (2.) Sometimes, he almost wholly removes that quietness and joy, but leaves them sensible of, and deeply concerned and pained for his absence, and panting, hungering and thirsting, longing and waiting for his return, Song iii; v. Psalm xlii; lxiii; xlii; vi; lxxvii. (3.) Sometimes he withdraws not only the spiritual comforts, but even his quickening influence to such a degree, that, as if asleep in the arms of Satan and their lusts, they are insensible of his absence, or, if they have a rational knowledge of it, they are little affected with their loss, Judg. xvi, 20. 2 Sam. xi. 1 Kings xi. 2 Chron. xvi. Mat. xxvi. 69,—74. (4.) Sometimes, God not only withdraws their inward comfort, but terribly disquiets and torments them by the rebukes of his Spirit, the challenges of their own conscience, the frowns of outward providence, and the harassments of Satan,—taking from them their outward comforts and means of his grace, Job x; vi; i; ii; xix; xxix; xxx. Psal. lxlii; lxxvii; lxxviii.

When believers fall asleep under divine desertion, their gracious habits become very weak, and lusts very strong: they become unconcerned about the Lord's return, and ready to comply with Satan's temptations. They that continue awake, retain a tenderness of conscience,—painfully feel the Lord's withdrawalment and frowns,—are apt to give themselves up to heartless and unprofitable complaints of their disappointments and troubles, and even to harsh thoughts concerning God, or concerning their own state and condition. While nothing can fill his room in their soul, they are apt to fear, that every thing which they enjoy is mingled with

his curse. And, if he frequently disappoint their ill-grounded and too limited hopes of his return, they are apt to fall into unbecoming expostulations with him, or expressions concerning him, Psal. lxxvii; lxxiii; lxxxviii. Job iii; x; vi. Jer. xx.

In withdrawing his comfortable presence and influence from his people, God *holily and wisely intends*, partly to harden wicked men in their sin, but chiefly to correct believers themselves, for their spiritual dullness and deadness, their want of holy awe of himself, and levity of heart in the duties of his worship, their resting on frames and ordinances, or good works, instead of Christ, their dallying with temptations to, and appearances of evil, and endeavouring to spare some beloved lust, their attempting to satisfy their souls with earthly enjoyments, their obduracy under affliction, their want of sympathy towards others in spiritual trouble, or their commission of some gross sin;—or, to stir and shut them up to a more lively, earnest and distinct reception of Christ and of God in him in the promise of the gospel;—to try the truth and strength of their grace;—to oblige them highly to prize spiritual comforts, and establish them in them;—to confirm them in his way;—and to prepare them for serving him in the instructing and comforting of others.

They, from whom the Lord hath withdrawn his sensible comforts, ought earnestly to apply to their souls, Jesus Christ offered to them in the gospel as their Mediator and mean of nearness to God; and to guard against all hard thoughts and rash speeches concerning the Lord and his dispensations towards them;—they ought seriously to consider the value of spiritual comforts, as an antidote against temptation and trouble; that their disquiet or unconcern hurt others as well as themselves; that as there is still open access to their gracious God, and many have recovered their spiritual comfort, they also may do it; that God hides his face from them, in order to make them more earnestly seek him, and hath already given them promises of spiritual joy.

joy and comfort.—They ought also to search out, acknowledge, and bitterly lament the sinful causes of their desertion, and seek comfort only in God as in Christ, —and to believe upon his own testimony the unchangeableness and sovereign freedom of his love, and earnestly plead the promises of the new covenant relative to their restoration and comfort, Psal. vi ; x ; xiii ; xxii ; xxxii ; xxxviii ; xl ; li ; lxiii ; lxix ; lxxvii.

When the Lord *withdraws his gracious influences to a fearful degree*, the deserted persons light of their mind becomes less clear and less powerful to affect and humble their heart, excite them to duty, or repel temptation, and less attended with a lively faith of that which they know. The exercise of their mind in spiritual and heavenly thoughts, is less fixed, frequent, and pleasant. Their conscience becomes less tender with respect to secret and spiritual wickedness, beloved lusts, or sins which are common in their age or place. Their will and affections become less active and fervent in desiring spiritual objects and delighting in secret and spiritual exercises. Their desire after God being much abated, they seek him less frequently, and with less care to find him. They less regard him as their chief end to regulate, retain and compose their heart. Their confidence in the promises dwindles away into a heartless timidity, or a thoughtless and legal presumption. Their hope abates in its frequency of acting, and degree of certainty, —or in its efficacy to make them esteem the promises of the new covenant, or to wean their affections from earthly things, prepare them for, or comfort them under suffering. The languishing of their love to God, and delight in him, appear in their forgetfulness of him, unwillingness to walk with him, or be drawn to him, —uncheerfulness in his presence, inconstancy in his way, and readiness to be turned out of it, unconcern about attaining high degrees and large measures of grace. The decay of their delight in the law of God appears in their unreadiness to approve it in opposition to themselves, and in their shewing less

hatred of sin, fear or shame on account of it, or care to avoid all appearances of, or temptations to it. — Meanwhile their indwelling corruptions increase their vigour and activity. Their mind conceives more favourably of sin, and diverts such thoughts as might embitter it, — nay, is apt to excuse, extenuate, defend or plead for it, as a thing secret, pleasant, profitable, small, the ordinary infirmity of saints, &c. Their conscience being thus perverted, forbears to warn against sin, reprove for it, or render them uneasy after committing it, or even calls good evil and evil good. Their will and affections more desire and delight in sin, and more powerfully excite to the commission of it — Hence, with little reluctance, if not some pleasure, they rush into actual sins, even such as they had formerly repented of, and resolved to avoid. — They make less preparation for the means of grace, have less love to, delight or liveliness in them, and less concern when they reap no benefit by them.

God thus withdraws the quickening and sanctifying influences of his grace, to discover to them their weakness and sinfulness; — to correct them for their pride, their careless improvement of opportunities, means, offers, influences and attainments of grace, and for their grieving of his Spirit, in dishonouring his person, refusing his direction and comfort, resisting his convictions and drawings, prostituting his gifts and graces, being ashamed of his truths, envying his gifts in others, and despising the instructions, and admonitions, and excitements which he gives by them; — and, for their rushing headlong into some sin, contrary to convictions, resolutions, vows, warnings, mercies, judgments, former repentance, &c. *Psal. xxx. 6, 7. and li; xxxviii; vi.*

The duty of those believers from whom the Lord hath thus partially withdrawn his quickening, supporting and sanctifying influence, is, to consider, how dreadful and dangerous their condition is, as it disqualifies

lifies them for serving God, or resisting the temptations of Satan; or the motions of their indwelling lusts,—deprives them of the comfort and reward of their duty, and daily waxeth worse and worse.—They ought to search out, and with bitter grief and hatred repent of the sinful causes of their desertion, and justify the Lord in all that is come upon them. They ought to consider, that their recovery is possible with God,—is promised by him,—and hath been often exemplified in the case of other believers; and that all delay of earnestly endeavouring to obtain it is extremely sinful and dangerous. They ought to rouse up their soul, and as men exceedingly foolish, guilty, polluted, and enslaved, to embrace Jesus Christ as in the gospel, made of God to them wisdom, righteousness, sanctification and redemption,—and, in waiting on the ordinances, take hold of, and earnestly plead the promises of his return, Song iii; v. Psal. xiii; li; lxxiii; lxxvii; lxxxviii; xxii; lxix; xxxviii.

Sometimes the Lord RECOVERS his people by sudden and sovereign manifestations of his favour. But often he plungeth them deep into trouble, before he return to comfort their soul after their remarkable apostacy from him. The departure begins on their side, but his gracious return alway on his. Till he restore his influences, they have neither inclination nor strength to return to him in the way of duty. His renewed manifestation of his love must determine them earnestly to seek him, and this promotes further nearness, God being good to the soul that seeketh him, and draws nigh to them that draw nigh to him, Lam. iii. 25. Psal. cxvi; xiii; vi; lxxiii; lxxvii. James iv. 8.

III. SPIRITUAL MINDEDNESS natively springs from living by faith on Christ, and holding habitual fellowship with God. It doth not consist in a multitude of thoughts on spiritual subjects, or even delight in them. Such thoughts may be forced on men by afflictions, gospel ordinances, convictions, fears, or the like.

like. Men may contemplate spiritual objects in a philosophical manner, in order to increase their rational knowledge. Ministers may carefully study spiritual subjects, in order that by preaching them they may procure for themselves subsistence or honour,—without ever attaining the very lowest degree of this truly Christian temper.—Spiritual mindedness necessarily supposeth the indwelling of the Holy Ghost as a Spirit of adoption in men's heart, and his having renewed it by union to, and communion with Christ, as a *quickening Spirit*, the *Lord from heaven*. It consists in their understanding being enlightened and furnished with a saving knowledge of divine things;—their will and affections being engaged to spiritual objects;—and in consequence of both, an habitual readiness and frequency in contemplating spiritual things, in a truly spiritual manner.

(1.) Their understanding must be *enlightened in the knowledge* of spiritual objects. Jesus Christ, as the light of life, must dwell in it, teaching them to profit, and giving them the Spirit of wisdom and revelation, Eph. v. 8. and i. 18. Isa. xlviii. 17. and liv. 13. Jer. xxxi. 33. 34. Their understanding must be stored with the truths of God, revealed in his word, concerning his perfections, purposes and works, his covenants of works and grace;—and concerning Christ the Mediator, in his person, offices, states, and work;—and the blessings of effectual calling, justification, adoption, sanctification, spiritual comfort, and eternal glory, bestowed through him;—and the laws and ordinances which he hath given to his church.—They must also carefully observe God's providences, and their language—the temptations to which they are exposed, and their proper remedies,—and the sins which defile and endanger them, and the means of deliverance.—All these things must be set in their proper light by the Holy Ghost; otherwise the knowledge of them will, like dead and lifeless lumber, fill the mind, or puff it up, 1 Cor. viii. 1. and xiii. 2.

(2.) Their

(2.) Their will and affections must be *powerfully engaged* to spiritual things. (1.) They must be *savingly renewed*, and endowed with a reigning principle or habit of indwelling grace. If they be only directed into a new channel of motion, or, by the pressure of troubles or of common convictions, and allurements of the Holy Ghost, thrown into a fit of spiritual thinking, that will quickly vanish, and leave the soul as much as ever under the power of sin, Hos. vi. 4. Jer. xxii. 23. 2 Pet. ii. 19,—22. (2.) They must delight in spiritual things *as such*. Thus, for instance, they must desire and delight in gospel ordinances, *as the appointments of Christ, as having him for their subject-matter, and as means of conveying him and his fullness* into their heart,—not as means of manifesting men's gifts, quieting a natural conscience, or of obtaining salvation by works, Psal. lxxxiv. 1, 2, 10. and xliii. 3, 4. with Isa. lviii. 2. Ezek. xxxiii. 31. (3.) Their whole will and affections must cleave to *ALL* spiritual things *as such*. Without this universality of disposition, there is no sincerity manifested, Matth. xxii. 37. Jer. xxix. 14. (4.) Each of the affections must act in its proper manner towards these spiritual and divine objects. *Love, desire, delight*, and *joy*, must fix on, and rest in them: *fear* must watch against every thing tending to disturb this rest: *hatred* must vigorously oppose, and *sorrow* bewail every defect of proper cleaving to these divine objects, Rom. vii. 14,—25. Gal. v. 17. (5.) The contemplation of these spiritual objects must habitually increase a likeness of men's will and affections to them, 2 Cor. iii. 18. Job xvii. 9. Prov. iv. 18. 2 Pet. iii. 18. and i. 5,—8.—Let lusts, Satan and the world oppose this growth in spirituality of affection as they will,—it is dreadfully contrary to the promises and commands of God, and to the honour of his grace, the credit of religion, and all true peace of conscience for men, to please themselves in any degree of grace short of absolute perfection. It marks great naughtiness of heart,—contemns the love
of

of Christ, as if it did not deserve a grateful return. It shews, that holiness is not valued for itself, but only as a means of escaping misery, 2 Pet. i. 5.—10. and iii. 17, 18. 1 Pet. i. 15, 16. Mat. v. 48. 2 Cor. iii. 18. 1 Cor. xv. 58. Job xvii. 9. Prov. iv. 18 Luke i. 74, 75. Tit. ii. 11.—14. and iii. 8.—*Saints decay in the spirituality of their affections, is manifested in their indulgence of carnal security, worldly mindedness, sluggish complaints of their inward condition, inclination towards some particular lust, or to delay important duties of religion;—it is extremely displeasing and dishonouring to Christ, grieves his Spirit, and excludes distinct assurance of his love. It exposeth to the prevalence of indwelling sin, temptations of Satan, and judgments of God.—They, who are infected with it, ought therefore immediately to remember whence they are fallen, and repent,—recal to mind their former experiences, and the Lord's kindness,—ponder the sinfulness and danger of backsliding from him;—and, in believing that God is unchangeable, and rests in his love, mercy and grace,—and in apprehending Jesus Christ as their all quickening and cleansing Saviour;—to plead, with application, his promises suited to their case, and for his Spirit to revive and restore their soul.*

—Nevertheless, believers *ought not to conclude themselves declining in spirituality of affection*, because they are oppressed with strong temptation, or outrageous motions of indwelling lusts; or, because they cannot, as formerly, vent their affections in tears, rapture of joy, or the like,—if they abound in humility, holy jealousy of themselves, diligence in religious duties,—and their judgment and will strongly adhere to spiritual objects, while their desires after earthly cares become weak and languid. (6.) The affections being thus assimilated to their spiritual objects, must cleave to them with great firmness, constancy, and pleasure. This ought to be manifested in believers studying to be thoroughly weaned from earthly enjoyments, as empty and

and unsatisfactory to souls, and apt to draw them off from God,—and in their vigorously repressing the remaining vanity of their mind, fancy, and senses,—in their striving against temptations to carnal mindedness, and labouring to keep their soul a continued fountain of spiritual thoughts.

(3.) There must be an habitual *readiness and frequency* in thinking on spiritual subjects, in a *truly spiritual manner*. These spiritual thoughts must not be forced or drawn out by external considerations,—but must spontaneously flow from their new nature, as water from its fountain, or flame from the fire. They must be easily excited by ordinances and providences: they must be attended with delight in their spiritual objects *as such*, and promote affection to them: they ought to exceed our other thoughts, even about our lawful earthly employments, in number and fixedness: they must become more frequent and fixed, and habitually seize on their proper opportunities of morning and evening, sleepless hours of the night, or time of attendance on God's worship,—and ought readily to start up in our mind, when we are occupied in our civil business,—almost every thing we see, read, hear, or do, becoming a mean or occasion of some spiritual thoughts, Psal. xl. 5. and xlv. 1. and lxiii. 6,—8. and cxxxix. 17, 18.

The advantage of such spirituality of mind is exceeding great. It mightily increaseth believers knowledge of divine things. It strengthens their faith by a frequent contemplation of unseen things. It employs their heart in a constant reception of Jesus Christ. It impresseth the love of God on their heart, and inflames it with love to him. It casts out filthiness, disorderly passions, distractions, despondency, wandering and weariness in religious duties, and so weakens the very root of indwelling sin, and represseth its motions. It promotes their fellowship with Christ, and God in him; testifies their love to him;—and conforms them to his image. It promotes peace of conscience, and joy in the

Holy Ghost. It anticipates the heavenly happiness, and promotes a longing readiness for it, Psal. i. 2. and exix. 98,—100. and lxxiii. 23,—28. ciii; civ; cxliv, —cl. 2 Cor. v. 1,—8.

To *promote spiritual mindedness*,—we must make sure a saving change of our state and nature by spiritual union to Jesus Christ. We must have an habitual, humble and deeply affecting sense of the natural corruption and vanity of our mind, and our insufficiency to think one spiritual thought. We must be much exercised in applying Jesus Christ, as offered in the gospel, for pardon, peace, holiness and comfort. We must carefully avoid intemperance, anxious earthly cares, vain conversation, indulgence of particular lusts, or of any thing which tends to render our mind carnal. We must watch for occasions and excitements of spiritual thoughts and affections. We must frequently apply our minds to more stated and solemn meditation. And, we must persevere in the study of spiritual mindedness, notwithstanding all opposition, John xv. 4, 5. 2 Cor. iii. 5. Gal. ii. 20. Eph. iv. 30. Luke xxi. 34. Mat. xxv. 41. Psalm i. 2, &c.

IV. In living by *faith on Christ*,—in *fellowship with God*, and in *spirituality of mind*, believers must **KEEP THEIR HEART**. This comprehends in it an earnest application of Jesus Christ to our heart, that, by his love, power and blood, he may fix and keep it;—a thorough consideration of the importance of our heart and its concerns;—a frequent and careful observation of the frame of our heart, deep humiliation for the evils of it, and earnest prayer for the Holy Ghost to purify it;—laying of solemn engagements on our heart;—much serious communing with our heart, in declaring important truths to it, posing it with affecting questions, and laying weighty charges on it; constant jealousy of it, even in our best frames, and realizing the presence of God, as ever present with, and looking into our heart, Prov. iv. 23.—As Satan continually
goeth

goeth about to tempt, and sin ever lodgeth in our heart; and, as a careful and evangelical keeping of our heart much honours God, manifests our sincerity, increaseth our spiritual comfort, excites and strengthens our inward graces, promotes the mortification of indwelling lusts, prevents our yielding to temptation, and tends to adorn our conversation before the world, we ought to keep it with all diligence at all times.—But the keeping of it is peculiarly difficult in some circumstances; as,

(1.) Under prosperity, we must labour to keep it from *carnal security and self-confidence*. For this purpose, we ought earnestly to embrace God in Christ given in the gospel to fill it, as its proper portion; and to make our prosperity a mean of enjoying his redeeming and soul-humbling love. We ought seriously to consider, how dangerous a prosperous outward condition is, and how many good men have been hurt by it;—that God esteems no man for his outward wealth;—that, in the last judgment, we must, as his stewards, give account of our improvement of all that we enjoy; that God's favours ought to humble us, and lead us to love, praise and obey him, Psal. xvi. 5, 6. Mat. xix. 24. Luke xvi. 1,—10. Rom. ii. 4, 5.

(2.) Under afflictions our heart ought to be kept from *repining and despondency*—by an earnest application of Jesus Christ as our sympathizing friend and physician,—who hath unstunged our troubles by his death, and sweetened them by his love; and by a believing consideration, that the love of God to us is unchangeable and eternal, and that our afflictions, proceeding from it, remarkably work for our real and everlasting advantage;—for the weakening of our sinful lusts, increase of our graces, and answering our prayers;—and that our afflictions are much lighter than those of Christ, and than we deserve;—and that fainting under troubles doth but add to their weight and painfulness, Heb. xii. 1,—11. Rev. iii. 19. Psalm xciv. 12.

(3.) When the church is in great distress or danger, we ought to keep our heart from *anxious despondence* with respect to her and her concerns—by a renewed, close application of, and familiar fellowship with Christ her head;—and by a believing remembrance, that he is in the midst of her, sympathizeth with her, and will permit nothing to befall her, but which is for her good; that she hath alway been much more benefited by adversity than by outward prosperity; that God hath often delivered her when she seemed in the jaws of destruction, and hath promised to be with her, and do better to her than at the beginning, Psal. lxi. 34, —36. and cii. 13.—28.

(4.) When gospel truths are borne down, and error prevails, we are to keep our heart from *ullen grief*, and from *instability and deception*,—by an earnest and extensive application of Jesus Christ, who is the truth and the life, to it, that he may instruct, comfort and establish it;—and by considering that he, being the truth, and the prophet, apostle, and faithful witness in his church, shall make it continue, and even shine more or less clearly and powerfully in this world, till the end of time;—by renouncing all dependence on our own understanding, and improving him and his Spirit as our director and establisher;—by studying great singleness of heart, diligent searching of the scriptures, and to have our practice answerable to our knowledge, Heb. iii. 1. Eph. iv. 12,—14. Col. ii. 2. and iii. 16. Phil. i. 27. 2 Pet. i. 19.

(5.) Amidst manifold great dangers and distractions, we must keep our heart from *slavish fears*,—by earnest applications of Jesus Christ and his blood to protect us from all judicial wrath,—and by taking hold of God in him, offered in the promise, as our *refuge and present help*. We ought also to ponder, that he, as our infinitely gracious father, hath the management of all things in this world in his hand;—that he hath commanded us not to fear men;—that slavish fears are

often

often groundless, and do our souls much hurt. We ought to satisfy our conscience from the word of God, that we are in the way of our duty. We ought to consider, how seasonably and graciously God hath delivered ourselves or others when in like cases. And, in trusting upon him and his promises of preservation and deliverance, we must cast all our care upon him, Psalm xli. Isa. xli. 10,—16. and xliii. 1, 2. and li. 7,—10. and xli. 4. Psalm lv. 12. 1 Pet. v. 7.

(6.) Under poverty, we must keep our heart from *distrust, murmuring, and dishonest inclination*,—by a believing reception and improvement of God in Christ as our *all-sufficient portion*;—by considering how much poorer Christ and his dearest saints have been; and that we have in possession and right many spiritual and eternal blessings, which are inexpressibly more excellent than any thing we want;—that our poverty is not our sin, but our affliction, and hath many precious promises annexed to it;—that it is our infinitely wise and kind Father that hath reduced us to it;—that it is a blessed mean of emptying our heart for Jesus' fulness, and will quickly issue in our being filled with all the fulness of God, Psal. cxlii. 4, 5. and lxxii. 12,—14. and cii. 17. and lxviii. 10. Is. xli. 17. Jam. ii. 5.

(7.) In attending on religious duties, we ought to keep our heart from *wandering and drowsiness*,—by having it much impressed with the redeeming love and death of Christ, and with the omniscience and omnipresence of God, and with that eternal state, which they respect;—by endeavouring alway to approach them in a serious and solemn manner;—by considering how much that wandering and drowsiness affront God, corrupt our duties, and darken our evidences of saintship;—and, by heart broken mourning over them, and crying to God for relief from them, particularly when they begin to prevail, 2 Cor. v. 14,—21. Rom. v. 5. Psal. lxxxvii. 7. xv.—c. ar. xix. 12.

(8.) Under great provocations and injuries we ought to keep our heart from *sinful anger, passion, or inclination*

tion to revenge,—by an earnest application of Christ's love to, and obedience and death for, his enemies ;—by a believing consideration of the mercy of God, and of the example of Christ and his father, and his most eminent saints ;—by considering, that God hath forbidden every form and degree of resentment to us ;—that he hath a principal, but holy hand in all that we meet with ;—that we would be infinitely miserable, if he should, in justice, resent all the injuries we do to him ;—that by furious passion and revenge we assist Satan and our inward lusts against our souls, and expose ourselves to farther injuries ; that, if we avenge not ourselves, God will honourably vindicate us, and rectify our cause, either in time or in the last judgment, Eph. iv. 31, 32. and v. 1, 2. Rom. xii. 19,—21. Mat. v. 40.—48.

(9.) Under temptations, we ought to keep our heart from *listening* and *yielding*, or from *continuing* in sin, if we have yielded ;—by an earnest application of Jesus Christ, and his word, love, blood, Spirit, and fulness, for our direction, and defence, that our heart may be fortified with love to him, and hatred of sin ;—by considering, that there is no true profit, or pleasure, or honour in sin, but much loss, pain and disgrace ; that God seeth our most secret sins, and will expose them publicly at the last day ; and that, to improve the mercy of God, or examples of good men, as an encouragement to sin, is infinitely dangerous, and an awful approach towards the sin against the Holy Ghost, Eph. vi. 10,—20. Mark xiv. 38.

(10.) Under spiritual darkness and doubting, we must keep our heart from *sinful fear* and *disquiet*, by an earnest fleeing to Jesus Christ as the great interpreter and alone atonement, and to the promises of the gospel respecting such cases ; and by considering, that neither the awful behaviour of God towards us in our afflictions,—nor the most horrid temptations of Satan, nor our relapsing into sins once repented of, nor the decline of our affection towards God, or increase of it towards

towards creatures, nor the wandering of heart in religious duties, nor the dreadful rage and prevalence of sin in us,—mark our state bad. Nay, their being our heavy burden, is a sure token of the goodness of our state, Psal. lxxiii ; lxxvii ; lxxxviii ; xlii ; vi. Rom. vii. 14,—24. Psal. xix. 11, 12.

(11.) Under suffering for Christ, we ought to keep our heart from *fainting* and *apostacy*, by earnest applications of the love, obedience and sufferings, and grace of Christ to it, to cleanse, fix and warm it with love to him ; and by considering, what guilt, disgrace and misery attend the desertion of Christ's cause in a time of need,—and what comfort, honour and advantage attend faithful suffering for him, 2 Cor. v. 14, 15. Luke xii. 8. 1 Pet. iv. 13, 14. Col. i. 24. 2 Tim. ii. 11, 12.

(12.) Under the near approaches of death, we ought to keep our heart from cleaving to this world, and from unwillingness to die, by the most close application of Jesus' death to our conscience, as the foundation of our peace with God, and the means of unstinging death to us ;—by seriously considering, that God, our Father, hath appointed men once to die ; that death, in its new covenant form, is an invaluable blessing, purchased by Jesus' blood, and procured by his intercession ; and that, in death, we will depart from sins and sorrows, devils and wicked men, to Jesus Christ, and to God in him, as our *exceeding joy* ;—and that he can take better care of our pious designs and surviving relations than we can, Hos. xiii. 14 Heb. ix. 27. 1 Cor. iii. 22. Rev. xiv. 13. Phil. i. 21, 23.

V. In our Christian walk, we ought always to exercise ourselves to keep a CONSCIENCE VOID OF OFFENCE towards God and towards men.—Conscience is that power of our soul, *not which makes laws for our conduct*,—but which *declares the law of God*, and *witnesseth and judgeth* what actions are agreeable to it, and what not, and *approves or condemns accordingly*.

It is often *deluded* and *erroneous*. And then it is attended with much levity and frothiness of mind and practice : it is impatient of contradiction or trial : it comforts men chiefly with their good frames, qualities and works, and persuades them, that they are singularly tender : it startles at smaller sins, or even things doubtful, or indifferent, while it connives at plain and obvious transgressions : it renders men most intent on doubtful or circumstantial actions of religion, and more zealous against other men's sins than against their own : it pays more regard to custom, human commands, and especially men's own inventions, than to the command of God ; or, under pretence of high regard to the word of God, seeks to throw off all regard to human bonds, or authority derived from him : it animates men to malicious bitterness and persecution against such as cannot comply with its dictates, Phil. iii. 1,—6. Acts xxvi. 9.

To manifest the necessity, freedom and sovereignty of his influences in preserving men from evil,—and the usefulness of his word as the only sufficient rule of faith and practice,—and to make them depend on him, not on their own conscience, for direction,—to exercise their grace, stain the pride of all glory, excite others to fear and watchfulness,—and to promote the judicial hardness of the carnal world, God sometimes permits his own people to fall under the power of a *deluded conscience*. Meanwhile, their own ignorance and inclination to evil, especially if attended with strong temptations,—their rash judging and hasty embracement of opinions relative to faith and duty, and their being biassed by prejudice, custom, or selfish concern ; and their apprehending that their good intentions will sanctify the means which they use, concur to render them easily deluded, Psalm lxxxi. 11, 12. Jer. xvii. 9.—And hence proceed their ignorant zeal, their strong affection to some particular tenet or course, and the promoters of it,—the secret operation of self, and the pleasant

pleasant frames which they enjoy in their way, are improved to delude their consciences into further mistakes, and a fervent and lasting attachment to them, notwithstanding the clearest reasons offered to the contrary.

In order to free their conscience from delusion, men ought earnestly to apply the blood of Jesus Christ for purging it from dead works, perceived or unperceived. They ought most seriously to consider, how sinful and dangerous it is to have the deputy of God in them, placing itself in God's room, and commanding, stirring up and approving rebellion against his law; that, however conscientious they be, the want of conformity in their conduct to God's law, which ought to be *supreme, nay only rule* of conscience, renders it wicked and damnable. They ought carefully to observe, what tokens of a deluded conscience they bear. They ought to consult serious, judicious and disinterested persons, on these matters, in which they find themselves singularly zealous.—They may also consider, how they would love their own course, in such as they dislike.

Sometimes men's conscience is *silent*, when it is not properly deluded. To humble his people,—stir them up to search the scriptures as their *only rule*,—to try whether they will forbear that which doth not clearly appear to be duty,—and make them highly esteem and seek after his own instructive influences, the Lord sometimes restrains their conscience. Meanwhile, their ignorance, their consulting of it in a selfish, biassed, and limiting manner, or their rebellion against its scriptural dictates, silence it:—or, if it speak, their carnal interests, affections, fears, friends, &c. pushing them to what is contrary, hinder them from listening to, and hearing it.—In such a case, Jesus Christ and his atonement ought to be earnestly received into our conscience, that his influence may render it quick-sighted and faithful. A deep sense of our ignorance and weakness must be studied. The sins which have silenced our conscience, must be sought out and re-

mented of. Instructions from God must be earnestly sought and accepted. In the strength of Christ, we must act up to the scriptural light which we have,—press after fellowship with God, and wait upon him till he reveal his mind to us. We must carefully observe the providences of God towards us, and how we are circumstantiated;—and, in our darkness, carefully walk according to the general rules of God's word, in doing whatsoever is pure, grave, just, lovely, and of good report,—and in all aiming at the glory of God and edification of men, Prov. iii. 5, 6. Lam. iii. 40. Psal. cvii. 43. Phil. iv. 8. 1 Cor. x. 31.

To render our conscience *truly good*, it must, by a believing application of Jesus' blood, be transferred from under the law as a covenant of works, and purged from guilt, defilement, and deadness,—to serve God under that law as a rule of life. It must be kept clean by an habitual application of this blood by faith to remove the influence of our daily infirmities, especially the more discernible and presumptuous. We must be acquainted and deeply impressed with the word of God and his authority, holiness, love, and other divine perfections therein manifested. In its whole work of judging, directing, exciting, approving, or condemning actions or qualities, conscience must proceed precisely according to the scriptures, as its *rule and standard*. Its declarations and dictates so formed, must be carefully regarded and obeyed, answerably to every circumstance, in our case. We must never attempt to bribe our conscience by any consideration of carnal profit, pleasure, or honour;—never rebel against its directions and challenges; never act with an unclear and doubting conscience; never pretend to be influenced by conscience, when it is only our affections, fancy or carnal interests that sway us; never offend the consciences of others, in things which, all circumstances considered, are indifferent;—and after all, we must betake ourselves wholly to the righteousness of Christ as the alone ground of the confidence of our conscience before

before God, Heb. ix. 14. and x. 22. and xiii. 18. Rom. xiv. 1 Cor. viii ; ix ; x. Phil. iii. 3.

If our conscience be *truly good*, it will much urge us to a daily application of Jesus' blood, for maintaining its purity and quiet :—it will impartially stir us up to all known duty, particularly the more important : it will carefully regard the principles, manner and ends of our works : it will readily accept of challenges from the word and providence of God, and will condemn, and be burdened with our imperfections in the performance of duties : it will earnestly promote holy jealousy of ourselves, and care to keep even duties and graces out of Jesus' and his Father's room in our heart.

—If our conscience be tender, though weak, it is good. In such a case, we will be much given to try our actions, natural, civil and religious, with respect to principle, motives, manner and end, and be glad to perceive their real imperfections, and ready to make a humble, hearty, and particular acknowledgment of them. Our heart will be deeply impressed with the majesty, mercy, holiness, omnipresence and infinite knowledge of God, and we will habitually lothe ourselves in his sight, for all our iniquities, earnestly plead for pardon and mortification, and readily receive Christian reproof. —Notwithstanding much confusion and darkness, men's conscience appears *sincere*, if it be tender with respect to sin and duty ; if it dispose to humble and earnest seeking of direction from God, and to a cheerful performance of duty, as far as it is known, and to a holy jealousy of ourselves ;—and a guarding against the influence of carnal interests and affections, Job xxxi. Psalm ii. 5. and li. 2 Cor. vii. 11. Ezek. xxxvi. 31. Psal. cxli. 5.

When men's conscience is *good*, it dictates to them by *fastening the commanding will of God* relative to duties, to be performed on their mind,—or his threatenings, when they have sinned, and by its quietness and approbation when they have done well. —Before we perform an action, we ought to seek and obtain a clear

and distinct judgment of conscience concerning the lawfulness of it. In order to this, our conscience ought to be habitually washed from dead works, in the blood of Christ, and under the powerful constraint of his redeeming love. We ought carefully to guard against all entanglement of our affections, and all influence of selfish honour, profit or pleasure. We ought to be habitually tender in regarding the most circumstantial directions of conscience. We must labour to have our conscience well informed from the word of God itself, not men's writings on it; and to have its dictates examined by it, and submitted to, as bearing the authority of God, in and through his great deputy. — All the dictates of a *well informed* conscience proceed from the oracles of God, extend to the principle, motive, manner and end of actions, as well as to the matter; and being attended with views of God's greatness and holiness, tend to humble us before him. Whereas the dictates of carnal interest and affection are enforced with selfish and worldly motives and ends, mark little regard to the principle, manner or end, and puff up men with pride and passion.

Men's rebellion against their conscience, in sinning against light, convictions and engagements, is extremely criminal. It proceeds from their want of a due awe of God upon their spirit, — their ignorance of the high obligation of conscience, — their having stupified it by the frequent commission of lesser sins, or study to bribe it into an approbation of sin, — or from their compounding with it by zeal in some things, in order to enjoy quietness in some sin, Isa. xxviii. 15.

Conscience not only *directs* us to act or forbear; and *observe* what we do, and in what manner, — but also afterward *examines* our conduct, in order to *declare* whether it was right or wrong, — and lead us out to thank God for that which he hath enabled us to perform well, and confess and lament that which was done amiss, and pray for and receive the pardon of it, Rom. ix. 1, — 3. Job xxxi. 2 Cor. vii. 10, 11 — Such after examination

examination of our whole conduct is required by God : it manifests a tender walk : it prevents much sin, promotes inward peace, and a holy and chearful conversation,—and without it, our soul will be fearfully overwhelmed with confusion and corruption, Psal. iv. 4. and xix. 5. 1 John iii. 21.—But it is often *very difficult*. It ought therefore to be alway begun with believing views and applications of Jesus Christ, as the propitiation for our sins, and healer of our plagues ; it ought to be frequently and seriously essayed, especially when our mind can calmly dwell upon the subject ; and it ought to be mingled with much fervent prayer for the Lord's direction in it, Zech. xiii. 1. and xii. 10. Ezek. xxxvi. 31. Psalm cxxxix. 23.—It is *exceedingly neglected*,—through the prevalence or reign of corruption in our heart,—our carnal security,—our indirect apprehension, that our conduct cannot abide a trial,—our imagining that some other religious performance may compensate the want of it.—In order to render such examination of our conduct pleasant to us, we ought to act conscientiously in all things. Being united to Jesus Christ, and having him dwelling in us as a principle of actions, we, under the influence of his blood, Spirit and authority, ought, with quickness and clearness, to observe, esteem, and delight in all the branches of holiness and righteousness, required by his law, and endeavour to perform them in the most perfect degree,—and particularly the more difficult duties of self denial, warring with secret, beloved, and prevailing lusts, trusting in a hiding God, and persevering in his way, notwithstanding many stumbling blocks laid before us, Phil. iii. 7,—14. Tit. ii. 11,—14. Eph. vi. 10,—20.

VI. AFFLICTION and DEATH being very important things in our lot, no small part of our Christian behaviour relates to them, (1.) In solemnly repeating our believing reception of Jesus Christ as our all-sufficient Saviour, who, by bearing of our griefs and sorrows,

opened

our safe passage through troubles and death to the immediate enjoyment of himself and his father, and by his intercession, power and grace, draws us thither. (2.) In pondering God's ends and designs in our trouble, *i. e.* that he may awaken our conscience, instruct our mind in the knowledge of Christ and his fulness, excite us to prayer, wean our heart from the world, mortify our indwelling lusts, try and improve our grace, and make us redeem time, &c. (3.) In searching out the sinful causes of our trouble;—what sins our conscience most presents to our view;—what others observe in our conduct;—what appears marked in our trouble; or hath been frightful to us in the views of death, &c. (4.) In serious thinking of death, and endeavouring to meet it in a state and frame of peace with God, Deut. xxix. 29. (5.) In committing the issue to God's pleasure, and resolving to honour him, if he recover us, Phil. i. 21, 22. Psal. cxv. 21. (6.) In discerning his hand in our trouble, however heavy and long,—and justifying his conduct, as wise, just, patient and kind, 1 Sam. iii. 18. Psal. cxix. 67, 71, 75. (7.) Amidst our lamentation over our condition, never murmuring, as that dishonours God, and adds to our trouble, 1 Cor. x. 10. (8.) In kindly resignation to our trouble,—as sent by our own God, as needful for us, and under which he will support us, and which will quickly pass over, 1 Cor. x. 13. 2 Cor. iv. 17. (9.) In praising God that our troubles come to us in love, and are so mixed with mercy, and work so much good for us, Psalm cxix. 67, 71, 75. Heb. xii. 10, 11. Lam. iii. 32. (10.) In examining our state, and calling to remembrance the gracious visits of God to us, and pondering, believing and pleading the promises, particularly such as have been formerly sweet to our soul, 2 Sam. xxiii. 5. Psalm xxiii. 4. (11.) In deep concern for the success of true religion after our death, and labouring by prayer, exhortations and encouragements to raise up a surviving seed for Christ, Deut. iv,—xxxiii. Josh. xxiii; xxiv. 1 Chron. xxii,—xxix. (12.) In watchfulness

fulness against Satan's temptations, in that especial hour of them, Matth. xxiv. 42, 44. (13.) In contemplating the glories of that heavenly state to which we are travelling, and our new covenant charter and claim to it, 2 Cor. v. 1,—4. 2 Sam. xxiii. 5. (14.) In much solemn committing of our spirits, and our relations and friends, and the church, to God's care, Psal. xxxi. 5. Jer. xlix. 11. Acts xx. 32. Gen. xlix. Dent. xxxiii. (15.) In taking death-gripes of Christ's offers of himself to us, as the chief of sinners, especially, if Satan or our own conscience attempt to persuade us, that we are still unregenerate, 1 Tim. i. 15. (16.) It is necessary, that we have our temporal estate so justly and prudently disposed of, and settled, as to injure none, and occasion no contention among friends, or render our remembrance unsavoury, Phil. iv. 8. Psalm cxii. 5.

CHAP. V.

Casistical Hints relative to SCANDALOUS PRACTICES, ERRORS, and DIVISIONS.

SCANDALS comprehend all these faults which tend to weaken our neighbours strength for, and comfort in duty, or make him stumble into sin,—whether they please or displease him. Nothing therefore is *scandalous*, but in so far as it is sinful in itself, or in the evil or imprudent manner of performing it, and in so far as it is known to others. Scandal or offence is *given*, when something stumbling to others is really and openly maintained or practised. *It is taken*, when
such

such maintenance of opinions or such practices are improved as an occasion of stumbling out of the Lord's way, or becoming more weak and inactive in it.— Sometimes, offence is given, but through the grace of God is not taken. Sometimes, men imagine it to be given when it is not, and accordingly stumble as if it had been really given. But too ordinarily, it is both given and taken, and there is sin in both giving and taking of it. It is very sinful to give offence. God hath most expressly forbidden it, and represented it as extremely hurtful and dangerous to ourselves and others. Even in doing that which the law of God allowed, Jesus Christ and his apostles manifested much holy care to avoid it. It manifests much contempt of God, and much pride, uncharitableness, and want of brotherly affection towards our neighbour. It destroys many souls, weakens or extirpates brotherly love, and leads men licentiously to practise every thing that is right in their own eyes. It undermines the soul-edifying fellowship of saints on earth,—kindles strife,—introduceth confusion,—and draws reproach on the Christian religion, Mat. xviii. Rom. xiv. 1 Cor. viii; ix; x.—In taking offence, there appears much rashness and self-love. It raiseth doubts and misinterpretations of our neighbours principles or practices, and rash judging of them; or stirs up carnal joy or grief, prejudice, fretfulness, jealousy, pride, emulation, and anger; or excites lusts productive of similar offences.

I. Every act sinful in itself and known to others, is a direct scandal or offence, 1 Cor. x. 11. Acts lawful in themselves become scandalous, when they are performed in such manner and circumstances, as tempt others to do any thing sinful; or make our good evil spoken of; or tempt others to rash judging of us;—or weaken their esteem of us, and affection to us; or mar their spiritual comfort; or induce them to follow

low us in that which is indifferent in itself, to the wounding of their conscience,—or shake them out of received principles of truth, or divert from more plain and necessary duties to doubtful disputations and circumstantial observances; or, when they stir up anger, rash jealousies, and evil surmisings; or, when compliance with indifferent rites import an approbation of their being imposed as parts of God's worship, Rom. xiv. 1 Cor. viii. —x; xiv. Mat. xviii.

Hence, though no necessary duty be ever to be forborne, or real sin committed, in order to prevent giving or taking of offence,—yet that which is indifferent in itself, is to be practised or forborne, as best conduceth to prevent offence;—privileges not absolutely necessary, ought to be parted with, rather than give offence. And the manner and circumstances of performing positive acts of duty, ought to be so ordered, as may best prevent the taking of offence, Rom. iii. 8. 1 Cor. viii. 13, 9. and x. 23—33. Gal. ii. 11,—16. 1 Cor. vi. 12. Dan. vi. 10—If the actions we perform be *certainly lawful* in themselves, and the tendency of their circumstances to occasion offence, *only doubtful*, we ought, in the most prudent manner, to inform those who, through weakness, are apt to take offence at them. We should consult such as are more disinterested than ourselves in these points. We ought seriously to think what we would wish done for our edification, were we in our neighbour's stead. We ought impartially to consult our conscience, not our selfish humour, before God, and earnestly cry to him for direction. And, in fine, we ought to forbear our acting in that matter, till the inoffensiveness of these circumstances be plain and manifest, 1 Cor. viii; x. Rom. xlv.—If *law suits*, as circumstantiated, be of small importance, or if they tend to the reproach of our Christian profession, and harden others in despising or opposing the gospel of Christ, they ought to be wholly given up. But, if not, and if the giving up of them would encourage others in deceit or dishonesty, we ought to

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prosecute

prosecute them with great meekness and candour, and ought, to the utmost of their power, to prevent our lawyers from using any fraud or falsehood, in order to obtain our claim, Matth. v. 40. 1 Cor. vi. 2,—6.—God, our most high sovereign, Lord of our consciences, having prohibited all giving of offence, *as sinful*, no commands of earthly superiors can, in the least, warrant our doing any thing which, *as circumstantiated*, is *offensive*, 1 Cor. x. 32. Matth. xviii.—If our omission of some acts occasion offence, as well as the performing of them, we ought, nevertheless, to forbear every thing which is in itself indifferent. In so doing, we *give* no offence; but our neighbour *only takes* it.—In such cases, we ought alway to take the most self-denied side, and condescend to our weak and circumspect neighbours,—rather than to those who appear biaffed, self-conceited and perverse, as the last are more led by their humour than by their conscience.—In fine, we ought alway to take that side, on which there is least appearance of giving offence.

When *offensive practices abound*, ALL, in general, ought to flee to Jesus Christ for preservation and direction, do nothing which appears doubtful to our fellow Christians, but that which is necessary duty;—guard against stumbling at the blocks which are laid in our way; beware of despising or rash judging of others;—avoid all engagement in perplexing and unnecessary disputes;—endeavour much activity and liveliness in plain practical holiness, and in faithfully and kindly removing of offences in the manner prescribed by Jesus Christ;—in fine, we must labour to exercise eminent affection and condescension toward others, particularly such as differ from us,—and all this from a single regard to the glory of God, and the peace and edification of the church, Psalm xvi. 1. and cxix. 165. 1 Cor. ix. 19,—23. and viii. and xiv. 26. Rom. xiv. and xv. 1,—6. 1 John ii. 10. 2 Tim. ii. 14, 16, 17, 23. Eph. iv. 12, 13.—And must beware of all partaking with others in their sin, by permitting it when it

was in their power to hinder it,—by exciting, causing, commanding, encouraging, defending or rewarding it, and by not duly reproofing, or mourning over it, Eph. v. 7, 11.

When offensive practices abound, church-rulers ought to shew themselves eminent patterns of sobriety, meekness, holiness and humility:—they ought to be deeply affected with that *giving or taking* of offence, which they perceive in others, and by prayer, reproof, advice and intreaty, labour to prevent offences, or root them out before they spread; and ought to cultivate the most intimate union and ardent affection among themselves.—Ministers ought to avoid the mentioning of any thing which tends toward doubtful disputations, and to endeavour leading their hearers to the most important and practical points of religion, 1 Tim. iv. 7, 12. 2 Cor. i. 10. and ix. 19.—23. and vi. 1,—11. Rom. xiv. 17, 19.—Church-rulers ought also carefully to prosecute public scandals in the manner prescribed by Christ, and with a truly Christian temper, Matth. xviii. 15.—18.

Such real offences as, through the custom of the country, are common among circumspect Christians, especially if no public and solemn warnings have been given against them, or if they relate to things which are in themselves indifferent;—and even such gross offences as, it is evident, cannot be got legally proven, or which are known only to a few, to whom the offender hath confessed his fault, and professed his repentance for it, and which can be kept secret without injuring any other, ought not to be prosecuted before church judicatories, Matth. xviii. 15.—18. When a multitude are involved in a particular scandal, especially if their temptation was strong, a formal prosecution of them will seldom tend to general edification. But the holding of a public fast on that account may be proper, Rom. xiv. 19. 1 Cor. xiv. 26, 40.

In managing private offences, the reprover's temper ought to be serious, kind and humble, sensible of his

own sinfulness before God,—and his manner meek and kind, but duly plain and sharp. He must carefully conceal the offence from others who are not necessarily concerned to know it, that he may not involve himself in backbiting and reviling,—in which one may sometimes hurt his neighbour and the church more, by reporting a truth which ought to be concealed, than by reporting a falsehood, against which his neighbour can vindicate himself, Lev. xix. 16. Prov. xi. 13. and xx. 19. and xviii. 8. and xxvi. 20. *Oh ! would professed Christians ponder this !*

When offences have been committed before many, but such as knew not the person ;—or, when few of the multitude present observed the offence committed ; or when, though the offence was very public in the place where it was committed, it is known to very few in the place where the offender resides,—church rulers ought carefully to ponder, Whether their public prosecution of it, would not rather spread the scandal, and wound religion, than edify the church.—But, when offences are plainly sinful, and, through their circumstances, or issue, or the offender's obstinacy, publicly known, they ought to be judicially prosecuted by church courts, 1 Cor. v. and vi. 10. Matth. xviii. 15,—19. 1 Tim. v. 20.

In the prosecution of public scandals, the honour of Jesus Christ and his ordinances, the general edification of souls, and the recovery of the offender are to be carefully kept in view, and all the form and circumstances of the censure accommodated thereto.—Nothing ought to be brought to the public, unless in so far as the ends of edification require it : nor, in ordinary cases, ought any thing to be brought before church judicatories, till after the offender hath been privately dealt with, Matth. xviii. 15,—17.—In their dealing with offenders, church rulers ought, as far as they lawfully can, to overlook all personal affronts and injuries,—non-compearance at a particular time,—or
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some rash expressions at first compearance, and the like, —and ought to behave with much meekness and compassion, mingled with grave authority, 2 Cor. x. 4. and xiii. 10. 1 Cor. v. 1,—5.—Discipline ought to be inflicted and received, *as a gospel ordinance*, subservient to the preaching of the word, and much prayer made to God for the success of it.—Processes, once begun, ought to be carried on with all *proper* expedition, that conviction may be urged home on offenders conscience, while it is awakened and tender; and that they may not be irritated with undue delay, nor the judicatories burdened with a multitude of causes at once, Mat. xviii. 17,—19. 1 Cor. v. 1,—5.

It is very difficult to state precisely, what SATISFACTION is necessary to remove a public offence.—Tho' magistrates ought frequently to punish the offenders *as criminals*, by fines, or otherwise,—no such thing ought ever to be exacted by church judicatories as any satisfaction, as their weapons of authority are not carnal, but spiritual. Nor is it much better to rest contented with a certain number of public appearances, without moral evidence of serious repentance, John xviii. 36. 2 Cor. x. 4. Rev. iii. 15, 16.—Nor is a mere verbal acknowledgment of the sinfulness of the offensive act, and profession of sorrow for it, *sufficient satisfaction*, as the levity and other circumstances attending this may plainly mark a want of real seriousness.—Nor, ought an inward reality and true sincerity of repentance to be insisted on as a necessary satisfaction, as that is known only to God. But nothing less than an apparently serious confession of sin, profession of sorrow for it, and promise of amendment, accompanied with an answerable practice, can be justly accepted by church rulers, as a satisfaction for a public scandal, Mat. xviii. 17. 2 Cor. ii. 6, 7.

If offenders condemn the procedure of church judicatories against them, refuse to appear at their bar, or with bad language abuse them to their face, or justify their offence; or if they have frequently relapsed into the

the same, or like offences, *more satisfaction* becomes necessary. But, if the original offence was of a lesser nature, perhaps simple obstinacy, or even contempt of the court, will seldom warrant a procedure to formal excommunication.—If the original offence was plainly *heinous* in its nature, as fornication, drunkenness, lying, profane swearing, wilful neglect of secret or family prayer, or the like, the contemptuous offender, after much dealing with him, and solemn prayer for him, and for a blessing on the censure, is to be excommunicated from the church of Christ and delivered unto Satan, Matth. xviii. 17. 1 Cor. v. 4, 5. 1 Tim. i. 20. Tit. iii. 10.—If offenders appear neither serious nor obstinate, it is oftentimes proper, that they should be publicly rebuked, in order to humble them, warn others, and manifest the church's abhorrence of their sin. But they ought nevertheless to be kept from sealing ordinances, till they appear penitent, 1 Tim. v. 20.

Even when the offences are most public, private dealing with the offender may be useful to convince and humble him, but ought not to prevent judicial prosecution.—Offences which were committed in the view of many who knew the offender, or were committed on purpose that many might know them, or are like to be known by many, or ready to infect many,—require the most public satisfaction. Nay sometimes, though plain scandals be not altogether public, yet, if they be scarcely reckoned offensive in the place, or are known to be committed by others in secret, or if the offender is known to be uncircumspect in other matters, or if, by reason of his reputed piety, his example be apt to seduce others,—it may be proper to require public satisfaction. Public rebukes and admonitions are very properly preceded by solemn prayer. They ought to be administered with the utmost impartiality, and with authority, gravity, grief, and tender compassion.—They ought to be received with a deep impression of the authority of Jesus Christ in them, and with much
brokenness

brokenness of heart, and earnest application of his blood for pardon and purification—They ought to be witnessed with much grief for, and indignation at the offence, compassion to, and prayer for the offender, with deep lothing of ourselves on account of our indwelling sin, and its innumerable irruptions, and with application to Jesus Christ for repentance and forgiveness, with thankfulness to God for preserving us from scandals, with resolutions to take more earnest heed to our heart and way, and with an outwardly grave and sorrowful behaviour.—When offences have been very atrocious, or when the offender hath been excommunicated, it may be sometimes proper, that he should publicly declare what sense he hath of his sin. But, in ordinary cases, or when the offender cannot be expected to speak to public edification, it may be as prudent not to require it. His grave and sorrowful acceptance of the censure or absolution, and his humble and circumspect life and walk, may as edifyingly document his repentance. The long established or used forms of censure, if lawful, ought never to be rashly departed from. Few offenders, that are truly convinced of their sin, will quarrel with the circumstances of satisfaction required. But if, with apparent humility, they scruple at something indifferent, they may be indulged as far as impartiality and general edification permit, 1 Cor. xiv. 26, 40. 1 Tim. v. 21.

When there is a prevailing report and public presumption of their guilt, persons, who are really innocent in that matter, may be brought before church courts, especially if they be known to walk untenderly with respect to some secret sins. But such a process is to be managed with great caution: and it is to be carefully pondered, upon whom, by whom, and upon what occasion the report hath been raised and entertained: and whether a judicial prosecution is most likely to turn out to the general ends of edification, or not.—It is not necessary, that there should be an accuser in church prosecutions, because she is bound to watch

watch over, and guard the character of her members. When an inquiry is founded upon a general, prevalent report, an accuser can seldom be had, every reporter shifting it off from himself. When a fellow Christian regularly brings the matter before a church court, he acts the part, not of an accuser, but of a kind friend, endeavouring the reformation of the offender.—Where the offence is originally private, it is a scandalous reviling of our neighbour to tell it to the church, before the more private means prescribed by Christ have been unsuccessfully tried; and, in some cases, it is scandalous to admit an information which comes in another order. But if one, after taking these orderly steps, without satisfaction, charge a judicature with partiality, if they refuse his representation, it may be proper to admit him as an accuser, and to censure him if he fail in his proof.

- If one complain to a church court of a personal injury done to himself, he ought seriously to be tried, Whether he seem *chiefly* affected with the offence as injurious to himself. And if so, he ought to be admonished to mortify his sinful temper; and less regard paid to his complaint: he is to be sharply rebuked, if he hath neglected the proper steps for removing the offence prescribed by Christ. And, if possible, the matter is to be made up between him and the offender, with the help of some prudent assistant.—If the matter must be judicially prosecuted, little regard is to be paid to the complaint of the person injured, as he may be suspected of partiality toward himself, unless in the case of rape, or like secret injuries.—If one, who is charged with flandering his neighbour, offer to prove his charge against him, he ought, nevertheless, to be censured for neglecting to follow out that charge in the manner appointed by Christ, Matth. xviii. 15, 16. and for the unseasonable, unchristian, and malicious-like manner, in which he hath uttered his report. Nor ought any proof produced by him be admitted as sufficient

sufficient to vindicate him from the guilt of calumny, unless it come directly to the point.—The charges which some persons, while under process, prefer against others, have such an appearance of sinful fondness to vindicate themselves, and of ill will, if not malice, against their neighbour, that they deserve very little regard, and especially, if they have neglected the steps prescribed by Christ, ought to be considered and censured as slandering of their neighbour.—Complaints of creditors on their debtors, ought to be very warily admitted by church courts, lest it embarrass them, and make the fear of exclusion from the seals of God's covenant an ordinary mean of recovering civil debt, Rom. xiv. 19. 1 Cor. xiv. 26, 40. Col. ii. 5.

If church rulers wilfully admit the ignorant or scandalous to the seals of the new covenant, it renders them scandalous, and provokes the Lord to blast their administration of his ordinances.—It may warrant Christians to remove to another congregation, where no such offence is given. Or, if very manifest, may warrant a temporary forbearance to join in the public ordinances dispensed in that place, it being extremely shocking to a serious Christian to receive the consecrated bread and wine from a minister, or elder, or even fellow communicant, whom he knows to be a tippler, drunkard, swearer, neglecter of the daily worship of God in secret or in his family, and the like,—and give them to another of a similar practice, 1 Cor. xiv. 26. and v. 11. and vi. 9, 10.

If church rulers neglect to censure scandalous persons, private persons ought to be the more circumspect and faithful in their conversation, and in their brotherly admonitions, that they may bear a practical testimony against the unfaithfulness of their rulers. They ought earnestly to wrestle with the Lord, that he would restrain scandals, and endow church governors with proper zeal against them.—They ought, in the most prudent and Christian manner, to represent the scandals and proof of the facts, and earnestly insist

with church courts for their prosecution of them, and remonstrate against their neglect or refusal of it,—and to carry the matter to superior courts, if inferior ones continue obstinate. And, if the sinfulness and the fact be sufficiently evident, they may exoner themselves by a protest or solemn declaration of their dissatisfaction with the supreme judicature, if they get no satisfaction, and there sist the matter, Eph. v. 15,—17. Phil. iv. 8. Col. iv. 17. Hos. ii. 2.

II. That *gross errors are scandalous*, is evident.—The scripture represents erroneous persons as *dogs, wolves, deceitful workers, ministers of Satan, deceivers, liars, and evil men*. Error is false of itself, fathers falsehood upon God,—is the *doctrine of devils, and work of the flesh*, excluding men from the kingdom of God. It mars the purity, order, union and fellowship of the church,—leads men to blaspheme God, murder souls, and bring forth the most abominable practices, Matth. vii. 15. Phil. iii. 2. 2 Cor. xi. 13. Rev. ii. Matth. xxiii. Acts xx. 29, 30. Matth. v. 19, 20. and xv. 2. 2 Pet. ii. 1 John ii. 22, 23. and iv. 3. 2 John 9, 10. The *suffering of gross error to be taught in the church must therefore be very sinful*. It brings contempt on the oracles and ordinances of God, gives Satan opportunity to employ ordinances and ministers as instruments of rebellion against God. It exalteth Satan to an equality with God in the church, the doctrine of the one being received as well as the other. It introduceth much confusion and destruction to men's souls, and becomes a dreadful plague and source of all manner of immoralities in a nation, Rev. ii. 2 Pet. ii. 2 Tim. iii. 2,—5, 13.—*Good men are often too condescending to erroneous teachers*. This may proceed from their apprehensions of the entangling arguments in favour of error;—from their sense of their unsuitableness to defend the truth against the erroneous, and their sinful diffidence of God's assisting them in their work;—from their confusion and doubting what may be

be most prudent for the time ;—and from their hearers dislike of plain detections of errors, for fear of bad consequences, Jer. i. 1 Kings xxii. 2 Tim. iv.

In a *hurry of temptation*, true saints may slip into errors : but it is not ordinary for them *deliberately* to embrace, and *obstinately* continue in them. For the scriptures represent heretics as enemies to Christ and self-condemned, and represent a recovery from a fixedness in gross error as an uncommon thing, and a being given to it as the fruit of not receiving the love of the truth, Rom. xvi. 18. Tit. iii. 10. 2 Tim. ii. 25. 2 Thess. ii. 11. — Professors of the true religion are *most frequently led away with error*. Satan, to procure honour and success to his own cause, especially tempts them to it. Such as have some tenderness of conscience, are more apt to indulge themselves in debates, than in loose practices.—Their disputings unsettle their mind, and divert them from the exercise of faith, repentance, self examination, and other branches of practical godliness, Gal. iii. 1. 2 Tim. iii. 6, 7. — By means of the providence of God with respect to them, and of the crafty and vigorous labours of Satan and his instruments to promote them, and through the circumstances of the church at their eruption,—gross errors have often a most rapid and powerful progress, 2 Thess. ii. 9,—11. Rev. ix ; xiii. 2 Pet. ii.

God hath an *holy and wise hand in the rise and spread of error and delusion*.—Though he intuse no wickedness into men, and neither commands, constrains to, or connives at it, yet he layeth such opportunities and instruments before Satan, as he readily improves for the promoting of it : he furnisheth men with such gifts as render them very capable of contriving, supporting, or propagating error, and gives them up to strong temptations to, and opportunities for it : he withdraws or withholds from them such conviction and outward restraints as might prevent their being deceived or deceiving others : and he cuts off by death such eminent advocates for truth, as could have checked the progress

of the errors and delusion, 2 Theff. ii. 11, 12.—The rise and spread of errors and delusion appears a *peculiarly awful judgment of God*, when, though very absurd and plainly contrary to scripture, it is promoted by persons eminent in the church, and carries away such as could have been least suspected;—when it is carried on with great activity and subtilty;—when it follows a remarkable neglect of receiving the truth in the love of it, 2 Tim. iv. 3. 2 Theff. ii. 11, 12.—It is not gross sins of the flesh, ingratitude for common mercies, or sins of common infirmity,—but their obstinate rejection of the light of the gospel truth,—their contempt of convictions, their breach of vows to promote reformation, their spiritual pride, their remarkable security under awakening ordinances and providences, their hypocrisy and formality, their high pretences to zeal for truth, without a real love to it, their itch after novelties in religion, their fondness to engage in doubtful disputations, their esteeming of divine truths according to the finery of their dress, their instability in their religious opinions, their dislike of a faithful and conscience-searching ministry, their fondness of reading erroneous books, or of familiarity with erroneous men,—that *especially provoke God to give up men to error and delusion*, 2 Theff. ii. 11, 12. 2 Tim. iii. 1,—9. Ezek. xx. 24, 25. Psalm lxxxi. 11, 12.

Satan hath a *malicious hand* in promoting error and delusion. He chooseth the most able, active, insinuating and unsuspected persons for his instruments. He labours to discredit the advocates for truth, by drawing them into some imprudence or scandal, or by raising reports of their weakness, covetousness, craft, instability, mutual contentions, or want of love to their people, or, at least, of their great inferiority in piety, learning and zeal to his advocates for error. He leads men gradually into the denial of truth, to quarrel with the expressions of the orthodox, and load their sentiments with the most grievous consequences. He diminisheth men's zeal against error, and procures respect to the
erroneous

erroneous by their affability, benevolence, liberality, learning, or the like, Num. xvi. 2 Cor. x; xi; xii. 2 Tim. i. 15. 1 Cor. xv.

Under Satan's influence men, particularly ministers, propagate error. They pretend to singular learning and knowledge of Christian principles and liberty, intimacy with Christ, piety, zeal, affection to their hearers or readers, and to eminently important designs of promoting the glory of God and salvation of men.—They speak with great confidence and high swelling words. They propose new notions and captious questions. They represent their opponents as weak or wicked. Sometimes they exalt human reason above the scriptures, and sometimes they tread it under their feet. They labour to insinuate themselves into the favour of the great, and to render faithful ministers odious to them.—While they carry on their designs with great craft and assiduity, they pretend much singleness, prudent and holy zeal,—and, sometimes, with much boldness, suffer for, or die in their opinions, 1 Tim. i. 7. Rom. xvi. 18. Jude 10, 16. 1 Kings xxii. 1 Tim. iv. 1,—4. Gal. iv. 7. 2 Pet. ii. 10.

All errors and delusions ought, as far as possible, to be prevented and suppressed.—If the errors be in *fundamental points* of divine truth, absolutely necessary to be known and believed in order to salvation, they ought not only to be judicially condemned, but the obstinate promoters thereof to be censured, even to the higher excommunication, if the circumstances of the church permit, 1 Tim. i. 20. Tit. iii. 10, 11.—If the error be not in *fundamental principles* of religion, but nevertheless much corrupts and defaceth the church, disgracing her ordinances, and breaking her unity and order, it ought to be judicially condemned, and the propagators, especially if obstinate, condignly censured, as the peace of the church permits, Prov. xxiii. 23.—If the errors be matter of doubtful disputation, in which godly and learned men, after much single searching of the scriptures, conscientiously differ,—judicial,
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determinations or censures, unless they be managed with great prudence and harmony, seldom do much service to the church.—Loving conferences,—or mutual forbearance,—both sides burying the dispute,—are apt to issue more agreeably, Rom. xiv.

If we consider, that no man on earth hath a full and comprehensive view of all divine truths ;—that few or no learned and enquiring men are without some false opinion ;—that opponent parties often differ in their expressions rather than in their sentiments ;—and that high censures of men for lesser mistakes, or appearances of them, would exceedingly discourage free and learned enquiring into points, and render the church a Babel of strife and confusion ;—and that, though it be alway sinful to condemn or deny the smallest truth, yet it is not alway sinful to forbear declaring or insisting on some truths, when people through weakness or prejudice cannot receive them, or when insisting on them might mar the peace of the church, or divert from truths of still greater importance ;—it is manifest, that it would be very improper to excommunicate men for mistakes in points of lesser importance. Much less ought men to disturb the church of Christ with contention about the mode of expressing the truth, unless the alteration of the expression bid fair to endanger the truth itself, Rom. xiv. and xv. 1,—6. John xvi. 12.—Meanwhile, it ought to be remembered, That no truth of Christ is of small importance ; and that the very least of them, especially if it be in a suffering state by concealment or opposition, is of more importance than the lives of millions of men.—and that the importance of truths ought not to be estimated from their immediate influence on the frame of our soul, but from their connection, as circumstantiated with the glory of Christ, and of God in him, Prov. xxiii. 23. Rev. iii. 10. Psalm cxxxviii. 2.

To prevent the spread of error and delusion, MINISTERS ought carefully to enquire into the language of providence to them and their hearers ;—to labour to have

have the utmost clearness with respect to their own spiritual state and condition, and their call to their office;—to enquire what hand they have had in procuring such a plague to the generation, and to wrestle with the Lord for light, prudence and zeal to oppose it;—to search more fully into the system and standard of divine truth, and into the arguments proper for refutation of such errors;—to cultivate the most perfect harmony in true sentiment, safe mode of expression, and tender affection among themselves,—along with an universal holiness of practice, particularly in opposition to their beloved lusts, and the reproaches cast upon them, labouring rather to live down calumny, than to dispute it down;—earnestly to stir up their hearers to practical piety, and, in a peaceable and prudent manner, to impress them with the danger of the spreading errors, and establish them in the opposite truths from the infallible oracles of God; to discover the errors and their propagators, and if possible to reclaim the propagators by private conferences.—If the novelty of the error, the danger of its infecting many, or the apparent reasonableness of the seducers, render a public debate necessary, it ought to be managed with the utmost candour, impartiality, meekness and order, till unprejudiced persons have their doubts solved; and the erroneous have nothing but mere shifts and absurdities to offer on their own behalf.—They ought also, if the circumstances of the church permit, judicially deal with, and censure the erroneous as they deserve,—but alway with much deliberation, meekness and compassion,—tender dealing with them, fervent prayer for them,—and readiness to relieve their necessities, 1 Cor. xii. 20, 21. and ix. 27. Rev. ii. Rom. xvi. 17. 18. Acts vi. 9, —11. Tit. iii. 10, 11. 1 Tim. i. 20. Rom. xii. 20, 21.

MAGISTRATES have no power of church discipline in their hands, John xviii. 36. Mat. xvi. 19. and xviii. 18. But as guardians of both tables of God's law and *terrors to evil doers and a praise to them that do well*,—they ought prudently to discourage and restrain gross errors

errors and delusions, as things hurtful to the commonwealth, and which dishonour God its supreme governor, and provoke him to destroy it. They ought, by their own judgment of discretion, to try them by the word of God, never taking any matter of religion upon the authority of any but God himself. They ought to stir up themselves and subjects, seriously to consider, what sinful hand they have had in the rise and spread of these errors and blasphemies,—and what is the language of providence to them in the permission of them. They ought to endeavour a judicious establishment in the opposite truths, and in all the leading truths of the gospel, as therewith connected, and to manifest an holy, prudent and ardent zeal against these errors and corruptions. They ought by every regular method to provide and encourage faithful orthodox ministers, and stir up such of them as appear most fit to emit proper refutations of these errors. They ought to stir up and encourage church courts regularly and prudently to try, discover, labour to convince, and, if necessary and expedient, to censure the principal propagators of the errors, oblige the erroneous to attend these courts for their trial, and also annex their civil ratification to the church censures, if it be politically judged necessary for the welfare of the state. They ought to promote the closest harmony among the friends of truth, and labour to compose any difference which happens among them. They ought, by their own example and every other Christian method, to encourage their subjects in general to adhere to their orthodox principles and pure ordinances faithfully dispensed, and to give no countenance to seducers. They ought to prohibit and destroy all impious and grossly erroneous books, and, by all methods proper in their station, to root out all false worship.—They ought to prohibit the publishing of heretical and blasphemous opinions; prudently restrain vagrant spreaders of heresy, blasphemy, idolatry, or division; and seasonably and suitably punish obstinate seducers for spreading their blasphemous tenets contrary

rary to the laws of the land, and for their slandering of faithful ministers, Deut. xiii ; xvii. Judg. vi. 25, —27. 2 Chron. xxx. 22. and xxxiv. 31,—33. and xv. 13,—16. Isa. xlix. 23. Deut. iv,—xxxiii. Josh. xxiii ; xxiv. &c.

In order to prevent the spread of error and delusion, PRIVATE PERSONS ought to be deeply affected with the appearance or prevalence thereof. They ought to examine, how they have provoked the Lord to permit this plague ;—and whether their spiritual state and frame be right with God ; or, if they are much prepared to be carried away by the delusion. They ought sincerely to repent of their lukewarmness, ignorance of, and instability in the faith, love and practice of divine truths,—and of their pride, self-conceit, and prejudice against faithful ministers. They ought earnestly to endeavour more distinct knowledge of, powerful confirmation in, the truths of God, and more actively to practise that which they know. They ought soberly to endeavour to have all their doubts solved, and to beware of discovering them to such as may be hurt by them. They ought highly to esteem their faithful pastors, and carefully observe what was the practice of the godly in former ages, while in like circumstances. They ought prudently to solve the doubts, and remove the prejudices of their fellow Christians, and labour to promote the *unity of the Spirit in the bond of peace* and love. They ought to wrestle much in prayer for God's recovery of the erroneous, and to shun all appearance of peculiar affection to their ringleaders, especially if they be excommunicated by the church, Rev. viii. 13. Eph. iv. 11,—14. Heb. xiii. 7, 17. Song i. 8 Heb. x. 24, 25. Mat. vii. 15, 16. Phil. iii. 2, 3. John x. 1, 5. 2 Thess. iii. 6, 14. Prov. xix. 27. 1 Cor. v. 11.

Gross errors and delusions ought to be thus *carefully prevented and removed*, because they greatly dishonour Christ and his Father and Spirit, disgrace and pollute his church, ruin the souls of men, and, being

pregnant with all manner of immoralities, hasten the destruction of nations. They are foretold as the peculiar plague of the last days. Great men have been too often carried away by them. Recovery from them is very difficult and rare. Such holy zeal, prudently and faithfully exercised, hath often prevented the rise and spread of them, Gal. iii. 1. and v. 21. 2 Tim. ii. 16, 17. and iii. 1,—9, 13. and iv. 3, 4. 1 Tim. iv. 1,—3. 2 Pet. ii.

III. DIVISIONS in the church, whether they break up public fellowship in gospel ordinances or not, occasion *much scandal or offence*. They are contrary to that love, reconciliation, study of peace, unity of affection, and intimacy of fellowship among Christians, so much recommended in scripture. They are contrary to the prayers of the saints, and to the end of Christ's death, and to his intercession and promise. They proceed from the most shameful causes, produce the most sinful and ruinous effects, and are very hard to be cured, John xiii. 34. Col. i. 4. 1 John iii. 14. 1 Pet. i. 22. 1 Thess. iv. 9. Rom. xii. 9, 10. xiv; xv. Heb. xiii. 1,—3. and x. 24, 25. Mat. v. 24. and vi. 13,—15. Col. iii. 14, 15. Eph. iv. 2,—6. Rom. xii. 18. Heb. xii. 14. Zech. viii. 19. Mark ix. 50. 1 Cor. i. 10. and x. 33. 1 Thess. v. 23. 2 Tim. ii. 22. Jam. iii. 17, 18. Psalm cxxii. 6, 7. Prov. xii. 20. Matth. v. 9. 2 Cor. xiii. 11. Phil. ii. 1, 2, 5. and i. 27. and iii. 16. 1 Pet. iii. 8. and iv. 8, 9. Psal. cxxxiii. 1,—3. and cxxii. 1 Cor. x. 17. Eph. ii. 14, 16. John xvii. 11, 22, 23. Jer. xxxii. 39.

The *shameful causes* of divisions in churches are,—men's stumbling out of God's way upon the one hand, and an improper management of a testimony against their faults on the other;—their ignorance and misapprehensions of persons and things;—their sinful suspicions and surmisings with respect to one another's ends and behaviour;—their pride and selfishness;—their envy of one another's reputation, contempt of their

their persons or labours, and aggravation of their faults ; —their carnal and factious contending for truth ; their violently imposing their own opinions on others, and persecuting every thing contrary, as if it were altogether abominable ; —their underhand dealing to gain others to their party, and reproaching of their opponents in order to render them odious ; —their unjust, imprudent, or unseasonable exercise of discipline ; —their partial regard to naughty persons, or idolatrous attachment to some eminent men ; —their unseasonable and immoderate pushing of ecclesiastical decisions ; —their want of mutual condescension, and bearing with one another's infirmities, or encroachment on one another's powers ; —their improper meddling with extrinsic or unnecessary matters, or with matters of importance at improper times ; —their fondness of novelty in sentiment or expression, Rom. xiv. Acts xv. Rom. xvi. 17, 18. Num. xii. 1 Cor. i. ; iii. 2 Tim. i. 13.

The natural and *ordinary effects* of such divisions are alienation of affection among friends, anger, strife, suspicious jealousy of one another's state, words or deeds ; envy of each other's prosperity ; want of mutual sympathy and helpfulness ; virulent reproaching of one another's persons, thoughts, words, and actions ; malicious stirring up of magistrates against opponents ; prostitution of church censures to gratify revenge or promote selfish ends ; drawing off professed Christians from practical godliness and fervent love, to vain janglings, or mutual rage and hatred ; heretical opinions ; sinful terms of church fellowship ; apostacy of some to open profaneness ; hardening of spectators in sinful courses or indifference about religion ; tempting of one another to sinful laxness or rigidity, in order to be unlike their opponents ; caressing of naughty persons, and easy admission of them to be church members or officers, in order to strengthen a party ; and, in fine, tearing asunder Christ's mystical body, and exposing her to contempt, and representing him and his religion as *earthly, sensual and devilish*.

The Lord *permits* such scandalous divisions in churches, to manifest the naughtiness of some noted, but proud and idolized rulers or members, and the excellencies of some real saints; to chastise professed Christians for their unsound opinions, carnal combinations, want of humility and love to others; to disquiet, blast, and mark with contempt ambitious and slothful ministers; to harden carnal professors and the wicked world in their evil ways;—and sometimes, to awaken serious ministers and render them more diligent, and promote the spread of the gospel, 1 Cor. xi. 18, 19. Lam. iv. 16. John xvii. 21,—23. Matth. xviii. 1,—6. Acts xv. 36,—41.——They appear *deep marked with his just indignation*,—when they are begun or promoted, while the church is under persecution or some other heavy affliction; when they are chiefly carried on by men who are eminently pious; when they originate in something trifling or dubious, and tend to promote some selfish or worldly end; when they are carried on in a rash, uncandid and resentful manner; when they are so circumstantiated, as to expose the persons concerned, and the cause of God among their hands, to much scorn and reproach; when, after apparent healing, they break out afresh with redoubled fury; when they carry off the minds of those that are engaged in them from almost every thing else, and make them imagine that almost all religion lies in being of their sentiment and party.

Divisions, even among godly church members, are *much promoted* by tale-bearers misrepresenting them to each other; by fears of censure from their opponents; by magistrates rashly countenancing one party, or the people thrusting themselves into the quarrel, and pouring contempt and reproach, or lavishing praise and honour upon ministers, as they side themselves; by occasional miscarriages of the leaders of the parties, especially if they happen in the prosecution of their differences; and sometimes by God's providentially giving the one party an opportunity to crush the other; and
exalt

exalt themselves on their ruins, or by his smiting the one party with some wrathful-like calamity.

The *reasons why* divisions, once begun in a church, are so zealously promoted and obstinately continued, are, men's fear of losing their carnal credit, or of displeasing and hurting their followers, if they relent or yield ; their vain confidence of the justness of their cause, and of their singleness and zeal for God ; their selfish attachment to their opinions *as their own invention*, or which they *implicitly received* from some favourite doctor ; their imagining things of lesser moment to be necessary and fundamental points in religion ; their prejudice against, and misapprehensions of the persons or opinions of their opponents, and readiness to entertain bad reports concerning them ; their improvement of their real failings, as if they were providential testimonies of the badness of their cause ; their fond hopes, that their opposers will yield to them ; their sinful aversion from mutual prayer and familiar converse on religious subjects ; and their absurd inclination to be as unlike their opponents as possible.

To prevent such sinful division in churches, Christians ought, with great earnestness, to live by faith in the most familiar fellowship with Jesus Christ the *great centre* of union, and in the lively exercise of piety towards God and love towards their brethren. They ought, with great singleness of heart, to aim at the glory of God and edification of his church. They ought to endeavour after an eminent degree of meekness, humility and self denial. They ought Christianly to disregard personal affronts and readily forgive personal injuries. They ought charitably to esteem others, and readily discourage bad reports concerning them, and to exercise a cheerful condescension towards them. Every one ought, thoroughly and impartially, to examine his own opinions, that *seeing the difficulties which attend them*, he may be *less inclined to a rigid imposition of them* upon his brethren, who bid fairer to see what may be objected

ed to them, 2 Tim. ii. 22. Tit. iii. 8. 9. 1 Cor. xiii. 4,—6. and ix. 20,—23. Rom. xiv; xv.

We ought to hold communion in public ordinances with churches, in which not a few faults and infirmities take place : otherwise we could hold communion with none on earth, nor they with us. We may hold communion with men that differ from us in several opinions and practices not fundamental in religion, tho' they should not see nor acknowledge their mistakes.—We may hold communion with men guilty of several personal faults, tho' on account of their weakness, they do not confess them or promise amendment; and even with ministers, who are guilty of offences, which are less clearly such, and less infectious; or, who live in a church where several non-fundamental corruptions in doctrine, worship, discipline and government are suffered to remain, Acts xv. 28, 36, 39. Rom. xiv; xv. 1 Cor. viii; ix; x. Phil. iii. 15, 16. Heb. x. 25. Phil. i. 18. and ii. 12, 21, Num. xii. Judg. xxi. 1 Sam. ii. Ezra x. 1 Cor. v; x; xv. with i. 10. Josh. xxiv. 14, 23. Rev. ii.

Our communion *in love* with fellow Christians, resulting from our union to, and communion with Christ, our and their common Head, ought never to be interrupted, or so much as one of the branches thereof. But as this only extends to that which is for their spiritual or temporal advantage, as well as for the honour of Christ, the centre of this fellowship, our communion with them *in love* requires, That we should abstain from fellowship with them in public ordinances, whenever it is so circumstantiated as to involve us, or decoy others into any sin of omission or commission.—In such a case, that fellowship with them would neither be *holy* nor for *mutual edification*, 2 Thess. iii. 6. Rev. xviii. 4. Rom. xiv. 19. Ezek. xliii. 11, 12. Christ's holding spiritual fellowship with men can be *no standard* of regulating our fellowship with them in public, and especially sealing ordinances. His spiritual presence is often not certainly perceived by even the enjoyers of it,
much

much less by others ; and so is excluded from being any rule of our behaviour, Deut. xxix. 29. His presence can neither occasion defilement to himself, nor harden others in sin, as ours may. He is alway present with every saint, even tho' excommunicated, or a papist, from whom, in such cases, he requires us to withdraw, Mat. xviii. 17. Rev. xviii. 4.

In different circumstances, the *grounds of just withdrawment from fellowship with churches* in public ordinances, are different in their degree of original importance. Many things ought to be borne with in a church while she is in an *infant state*, or pressing forward to reformation, which ought not to be borne with in her *adult state*, or when she is declining from attained and covenanted reformation.—In the first case, the faults ought to be imputed to weakness ; but in the last to wilful wickedness ; and perjury is added to the original nature of the sin. Less purity may warrant our *occasional* fellowship with churches, with which we never had any organical connection, than will warrant our stated fellowship with a church in organical connection with her.—Less ground will warrant our withdrawment from particular ministers in a broken state of the church, when we have no other way of testifying against their public faults, than will warrant our withdrawment from them when we have opportunity to complain of them to regular judicatures.—And ministers giving up with these courses which, in a broken state of the church, warranted our withdrawment from them, warrants our returning to them, even tho' they should not make particular confession of these faults. Their ceasing to practise and justify them is an implicit acknowledgment, 1 Cor. i. 10. and v ; x ; xi ; xiv ; xv. Heb. x. 38.

Heresy in doctrine ; idolatry in worship ; tyranny in government ; habitual intrusion of ministers ; progressive indulgence of manifest scandals ; imposition of sinful terms of communion by requiring any omission or commission, which, as circumstantiated, is sinful, are
sufficient

Sufficient grounds of our withdrawment from a church, with some of whose members left behind, Christ holds spiritual fellowship. But before we separate, she must not only be guilty of one or more of these evils, but also obstinate therein, in opposition to the ordinary means of reclaiming her. And often providence points out the duty of separation by permitting some faithful minister to be tyrannically thrust out of her communion, 2 John 9 — 11. 2 Cor. vi. 17. Rev. xviii. 4. John ix. 34. Jer. xxiii. 32. John x. 1. Rom. x. 15. Gal. v. 1. Phil. iii. 16. Eph. v. 7, 11. 2 Thess. iii. 14.

Both withdrawers, and those from whom they withdraw, are often guilty of great sin in the separation. They, from whom the separation is made, are guilty, if by any sinful or imprudent conduct they have given any real or apparent ground of withdrawment from them. They who withdraw are guilty, if they do it without sufficient grounds, or without proper regard to these grounds in doing it; or, if they withdraw under prejudice, or in a light, furious, passionate, headstrong, selfish, or imprudent manner; or, if they extend their separation beyond its just grounds; or, if they condemn and reproach those from whom they have withdrawn, and rejoice to hear bad reports of them; or if, by their imprudent and uncircumspect behaviour after their withdrawment, they harden those from whom they have separated, in their sinful backslidings or extravagance.

Both parties often retaining the essentials of a true church, and both being guilty of sin in the separation, the Lord often continues his presence and gracious influence, in some measure, with both, Mat. xviii. 20. and xxviii. 20. Exod. xx. 24. and meanwhile punisheth them both with partial restraints of his influences, or other judgments alternately or conjunctly inflicted on them, Amos iii. 2. Hos. v. 15.

In order to *heal the divisions* in a church, none of the discordant parties ought to attempt to crush, or mark with infamy their opponents, who are, on the main,

main, found in the faith, or to rule over them by dint of authority ; nor ought an universal and perfect agreement in judgment or practice to be insisted for, as a condition of union in church fellowship.—But it ought to take place, notwithstanding the continuance of all such differences and faults, as did not sufficiently warrant the separation, and of which the consequences are not more dreadful than those of the division.—And in order to effect it, both ministers and people ought to be deeply sensible that the study of an holy union in church fellowship among Christians, is as indispensable a duty, as prayer, reading, or hearing of God's word, or the like,—and to be deeply impressed with the sinfulness, dreadful fruits, and ensnaring nature of divisions. They ought carefully to examine their own spiritual state and frame, and to endeavour to have it right with God, as *all true love to, and union with saints, must arise from true love to God in Christ.*—They ought to search out, what direct or indirect hand they have had in the division, and be deeply humbled for it. They ought to stir up themselves and others to the utmost diligence in practical piety, and to much solemn prayer and fasting for direction and success in their attempts towards union. They ought earnestly to study the deepest humility and self-denial, and an habitual sense of their own ignorance, weakness and readiness to mistake, especially in matters of necessary duty. They ought, by kind, respectful and earnest intreaties, familiar visits, or good deeds, to solicit their opponents to concur with them in promoting of union by holding meetings for prayer and mutual conference. Both parties, especially those that have most power on their side, ought, to their utmost, to exert themselves in every lawful condescension. Nor ought one party to be shy in their condescensions, because the other appears sinfully stiff, particularly in divisions relative to discipline and government, with which men's pride and selfish interests do often connect themselves.—It were often better that the one party should

be permitted to proceed in their own way in many things, than that the division should be continued.—Ministers ought to be ready to part with their particular station, or even the exercise of their office in particular, rather than hinder peace and union in the church of Christ.—All concerned ought to discourage all reproachful reports of their opponents, and abhor all advices to perpetuate the division, however plausible.—All judicial condemnation of one another ought to be foreborne, or, if passed, to be cancelled, and buried in forgetfulness.—All factious endeavours to support our own side of the dispute ought to be dropt, and even necessary self-vindication to be managed with great meekness and self denial. Separated courts are to be guarded against. Contrary elections and ordinations of church rulers ought, as far as possible, to be avoided. Or, if they have taken place, one of these ministers may yield up his charge, with consent of his people, or both be continued till death.—All dividing fasts, or causes thereof, ought to be forborne.—When meetings for promoting of union are held, the most sensible, peaceable, prudent and humble ought to be the *only managers*, or at least the *principal speakers*—It ought to be first considered by the discordant parties, *how far they really agree*, in order to conciliate affection, and manifest that their real differences are but few, and comparatively of smaller importance, if in any thing at all, but words,—and the most ticklish points ought to be last considered. If any heat be like to kindle, let it be interrupted by joint and solemn prayer, which is of great use to calm men's spirits. All contests about the form of procedure, and all recriminations and contradictions of one another, ought to be carefully avoided. All ought to vie with each other in acknowledging their own faults, and overlooking those of their neighbour, and in making the most condescending proposals of peace and unity. And if, after all, they cannot see *eye to eye*, they may agree to bury their differences in silence, till the Lord be pleased to give more light,
Matth.

Matth. xviii. 1,—6. Rom. xiv, xv. Eph. iv. 3,—23. Phil. i. 27. and ii. 1,—5. and iv. 3, 4. And, as magistrates, private persons ought never to contemn or neglect God's public ordinances on account of ecclesiastical divisions, they ought to urge ministers, whose carnal honours and selfish humours too often incline them to kindle or perpetuate division,—to pursue after union, Col. iv. 17.

If the division be founded on differences about *doctrinal points* not fundamental, but which have a more remote connexion with the habitual practice of Christians, parties ought, by private conference, or literary correspondence, managed in the most kind, meek, and humble manner, to labour to find out the real truth. If this succeed not, they may lay their differences before some judicious disinterested divines, who may perhaps clear the point, or find a medium of union. If this succeed not, both parties may avoid meddling with these differences, at least in public : or, if they apprehend it necessary to touch them, they may do it in such a manner as simply to establish the truth, and throw no reproach on, but rather mention with honour their opponents. If one party hath obtained a judicial determination in their favours,—the other may rest in a protestation against it, or, if necessary, a humble vindication of their opinion. Nor ought the other party to take offence hereat. Meanwhile both ought to cultivate Christian fellowship together, and carefully avoid all clashing in doctrine, when they happen to preach together at sacramental occasions, ordinations, or the like.

If the division be founded on *differences relative to the manner of worship*, all possible care ought to be taken, that nothing indifferent, and much more nothing that hath an appearance of evil be imposed as necessary; nor in any form, if it tend to give offence. None ought to take offence at any circumstance of worship, which, as circumstantiated, is allowed to be merely indifferent.—The more simple the forms of worship be

kept in churches, the more easily is division prevented on this head.—It is even better to forbear some circumstantial reformation in the mode of worship, than to introduce it in a manner which disturbs the peace of the church, and perhaps only pleaseth some young novices.

If the division be founded on *alleged personal faults*, the matter may be impartially tried ; and if the complainers cannot produce decisive proofs, they ought to give up with all profession of offence on that head. If the facts be certain and grossly sinful, they ought to be acknowledged, lamented, and censure submitted to. But, in many cases, it were better that adequate censure were at least delayed, than that a division should be continued on account of it.—If both parties have their own manifest infirmities, and have injured each other by reproach, censure, or the like, mutual forgiveness ought to bury them all. *A contrary behaviour* is often the *most satisfactory acknowledgment*.—If the division happen about the character of a particular minister, it is better that one of a suspicious character be laid aside, than that the peace of the church should be marred on his account,—and it would be for his honour to propose it himself. Nay, better that an innocent or eminent minister demit his charge, than occasion division.—If the profaneness of ministers or members hath occasioned a withdrawalment, these corrupt practices ought to be laid aside, or purged by censure. And the withdrawers ought to manifest themselves ready to return, whenever they see church rulers disposed to purge out scandals, tho', for a time, they cannot make such progress as they wish.

As the selfish humours, and carnal interests and aims of church rulers, particularly ministers, so often closely twist themselves with these points which relate to church government, several circumstances of which are less clearly pointed out in scripture, divisions about these are often very hard to be cured.—All Christians may cheerfully unite in receiving or submitting to that form
of

of church government which can reach the whole body, and remove offences of every kind, and admits all church rulers, in an united and co-ordinate manner, to act in opposition to error and corruption, and in favours of truth and holiness, Eph. iv. 3,—15. 1 Pet v. 1,—4. No other form of government can without sin be actively approved.—But, if we cannot obtain a proper form of church government, we may, in some circumstances, live under the shadow of one, which hath considerable defects, if we be not required to approve of them.

If the division be founded on a *difference concerning the authority of a particular church court*, the ground is insufficient. And in order to union, all disputes concerning the authority or non-authority of courts on both sides, and concerning the validity or nullity of their acts, ought to be superseded, and whatever is useful in the acts on both sides, may be collected and established by an united court.

If the division hath been occasioned by *some practices established* by church judicatures to which our conscience cannot submit,—if no verbal or practical approbation of that decision or practice be required of us, and especially if that decision hath seldom occasion to be executed, we may hold communion with the body of that church, though it may be proper to keep at a distance from those that pushed or eagerly support that decision. Nay, things may be so circumstantiated, that it would be our duty to hold fellowship with the enactors of it, if they give up with their zeal for it, though they should not acknowledge their offence or receive censure : for, in disputable points, men, who are truly willing, may be incapable to perceive their mistakes so clearly as to acknowledge them, or to censure others for them. Moreover, mistakes may be plainly perceived, and yet not be got censured in a consistency with the general edification of the church, Gal. v. 10,—12. 2 Cor. x. 6. And as union, in some cases, manifests love to the offenders, it may more readily

dily bring them to an acknowledgment of their offences, than separation or division could do.

If some *unworthy persons have been admitted to the ministry*, or *both parties have ordained pastors in the same place*,—it ought to be considered, That, as in a marriage, so in ordination, manifold defects will not invalidate the office, if the person be worthy of his charge. If he be unworthy, the union of faithful ministers is an excellent mean of getting him deposed; or laid aside, if his character be doubtful. If two pastors of good repute be fixed in the same original congregation, one or both may be continued, as the spiritual welfare of the congregation requires. If ministers be truly diligent and faithful, they will never want work. And, to manifest their mutual affection, they may frequently exchange pulpits with one another.

If worthy ministers have been deposed, and others that deserved censure, overlooked;—as rigidity in deposing worthy men, even for real slips, especially if chiefly committed against ecclesiastical laws, is seldom either lawful or prudent, such unjust sentences ought to be, at least materially reversed. But better that even a worthy man should, for a time, forbear the exercise of his ministry, than that the peace of the church should be disturbed,—unless his opponent appear intent on trampling down some divine truth along with him.—No unworthy person ought ever to be admitted or continued in the ministry, as none knows how much dishonour to Christ and mischief to souls it may produce; or what a dreadful curse it may bring on those that help or hold him in. Nevertheless, it ought not to hinder union, that he cannot be so readily deposed as could be wished; as processes ought to be very cautiously carried on in church courts; and censure never be inflicted but on clear grounds, Gal. v. 6,—12. 2 Cor. x. 6. 1 Tim. v. 1, 21.

If some on the one hand *hate to join in the government of the church with some that they look upon as naughty men*; and some on the other hand, *disdain to join*

join with some whom they look upon as rigid schismatics :—they, who have any manifestly naughty ministers or even ruling elders among them, ought to consider, as before God, how contrary such a mixture is to the very nature of the Christian church, and how the retaining of such persons involves themselves in sinful separation or schism, in giving to those who have a tender conscience, so strong a temptation to withdraw from their communion. These, on the other hand, ought to consider, That to live in schism or sinful separation from the church of Christ is no less wicked than to live in whoredom, murder, or the like, as it is a deliberate tearing and murdering of Jesus Christ in his mystical body. If each party duly consider their own sin, that will quickly abate their mutual disdain — We need never expect a church on earth, in which every officer or member will be what they ought.

If one party be afraid that they *will be overlooked*, or even opposed, and *the management be chiefly in the hand of their opponents*, if they unite with them,—they ought to consider, That the contempt of themselves is but a trifle, when compared with the division of a church;—that no party ought to expect full satisfaction in the management of matters in either church or state ; that nevertheless, the bad consequences of division are much worse ; and that they have a more active hand in them if they continue the division, than in these inconveniences which are merely occasioned by union.—Besides, much may be done to prevent such apprehended mismanagement. All doubtful things ought to be forborne : and every thing calculated to give offence left unpractised. Whatever cannot be generally agreed in, may be referred to the consideration of judicious and disinterested persons acceptable to both parties. Delicate matters may be kindly conferred upon, before they be judicially admitted into the supreme court. Nothing dubious or entangling ought to be carried by the *mere force* of votes. Select persons may be chosen to compose occasional differences.—If union cannot be attained

tained in every point, it may be fixed and improved in the principal ones.

This union among Christians ought especially to be studied and promoted, when the church is under persecution or imminent danger from heretical seducers :—when she hath little or no help, or encouragement, from the state :—when she and her government and gospel ordinances are in great danger of being rendered contemptible by the divisions in her :—and when God in his providence offers any remarkable opportunity of an happy conjunction.

Notwithstanding the great importance of close Christian union among church members, many of them,—from their want of due love to Jesus Christ, and regard to his honour ;—from their proud valuation of themselves above others ;—from their want of that heart-melting fellowship with Christ, which powerfully inclines to a tender love to his church and people ;—and from their little considering the dreadful nature and fruits of church divisions,—and what they will think of them in death and in the last judgment, when that which they reckoned no more than prudence or wholesome severity, will be exhibited by Christ, as an abominable defilement, or murderous rending of his mystical body, and abuse of his precious saints ;—and from their ignorance of that which the most tender Christians in former ages have done to procure and cultivate union in the church, even when the grounds of difference were greater.

28 JY 58

T H E E N D.

